

**The Romance of an American Duchess.**

VOL 29 NO 3

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1909

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# THE SMART SET

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**In This  
Number:**

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Jean Webster,  
Arthur Stringer,  
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A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

No. 3

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# THE ROMANCE OF AN AMERICAN DUCHESS\*

By DEMETRA AND KENNETH BROWN

IN one of those Upper Fifth Avenue mansions in which American luxury has reached its climax, a girl came to the window, drew aside the lace curtains and looked out into the Park. She remained motionless for a few seconds, then restlessly let the lace fall from her hands, walked back into the room and stood before the open fire, her foot resting on the brass fender. She stared into the flames as if in their phantasmagoric designs she could find out what it was she herself wanted. So absorbed was she that she did not hear her stepmother enter the room, until the latter said in her carefully modulated voice:

"Are you not coming with me, Stephana, dear?"

The girl was startled, and for an instant her eyes had the expression of one gathering herself together to return from the abstract to the concrete. "N-no," she said at last, "I do not think I shall come. I have seen so many hunters jump tin stone walls and so many other horses spinning around the ring that my brain whirls."

"I thought you liked horses, dear," the older woman said. In spite of the term of endearment the voice contained no warmth.

"Yes, I love horses, but less in a horse show than anywhere else."

"What are you going to do with yourself, then, this afternoon?"

"I don't know exactly. Probably I shall take a run in the motor, out where

I can get some country air to breathe. Three weeks of New York seem to use up every bit of vitality I bring into it."

"You know, Stephana, that after the Horse Show Mrs. Weatherbee-Jones and the Duke de Longtour are coming here for tea." Hesitating an instant, she added: "You will be back in time to dress, won't you?"

Stephana glanced at the reflection of her blue velvet walking gown in the long mirror across the room. "What is the matter with my clothes?" she asked.

"Your suit is very becoming to you, dear," her stepmother answered diplomatically; "but it is hardly the gown in which to receive the Duke on his first call."

"Is he a pretender, too?" Stephana asked wearily.

"Only if you like him, dear. They say he is very handsome and charming, and not quite thirty. You know, Stephana, that your father and I think only of your welfare; we want you to make a very happy and very brilliant marriage, such as you have a right to expect."

"They don't seem to turn out very happily, these brilliant marriages," Stephana retorted.

"But yours must, dear. You can have the best there is. You have rejected many noblemen, and you may keep on doing so until you find the right one. You are not yet twenty-two, and no one is trying to hurry you."

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Stephana did not reply to these assurances. She knew that she was her stepmother's trump card in the social game. For several years she had watched with sardonic humor how Mrs. Brennan had handled her with all the care a turfman would put upon the education of a promising two-year-old.

"You will be back in time, won't you, Stephana?" Mrs. Brennan continued anxiously. "The Duke came to town only yesterday. He has been with the Van Allens on their private car." She winked playfully at her stepdaughter. "They have been trying to marry him to Beatrice."

"Well, why doesn't he marry her?" Stephana asked indifferently. "Beatrice has several millions in her own right, and she isn't bad-looking."

"I don't know why he doesn't. I know only what Mrs. Weatherbee-Jones tells me. She says that, though he has been here for three months, he hasn't shown especial interest in any girl. The men say he hasn't even asked how much money they have. It is very gentlemanly, isn't it?" As Stephana gave an audible sniff, Mrs. Brennan hastened to add: "It is odd we should never have met him. When he was in Newport, we were yachting—"

"And entertaining Prince Montignolli," Stephana put in.

"You were hard on him, dear. He was tremendously in love with you. I was sorry for him when you refused him."

"If I hadn't, you would have had to be sorry for *me* some day," Stephana said.

"Well, never mind about the Prince. I was telling you about the Duke. He has taken tremendously everywhere, although he's quite reserved; and Mrs. Weatherbee-Jones tells me that he has been given to understand that he could have several girls—"

"Fortunes," Stephana amended.

"I wish I could break you of the habit of being so cynical," Mrs. Brennan said, in a tone of self-reproach. "You know that all the men who have asked you to marry them have been in love with you—at least, until you

showed them there was no hope for them. They couldn't help it."

She laid her hand caressingly on Stephana's shoulder; but the girl turned away with a shrug that shook it off. Her father's wife had the ability to force her into a self-consciousness which she hated.

"I am not cynical," Stephana said. "I only happen to see things as they are."

Mrs. Brennan sighed and did not continue the argument.

"No, Mrs. Weatherbee-Jones assures me that the Duke has not made the slightest advance to any girl here."

"Perhaps we have misjudged him," Stephana said gravely. "He may only be going to write a book about us."

"Stephana, dear!"

"Very well," laughed the girl; "I shall be back in time. You had better go now or you will miss part of the show."

"Yes, I am going right away. Good-bye, dear."

For some minutes after Mrs. Brennan's departure Stephana loitered about the room still undecided. She went to the window and looked out doubtfully; then, pressing a button in the wall, she ordered her touring car. She sank into an easy chair, clasped her hands behind her head and closed her eyes. Sitting thus motionless, as if in sleep, there was a look of discontent on her face, which was brought out the more by the luxury of the room.

In the veins of this girl, who had always been a riddle to the clear-sighted, calculating eyes of her stepmother, there flowed, now quietly, now turbulently, the blood of a mother half Italian, who had died in giving her birth. From her she had inherited "temperament," that mysterious quality so hard to define. It made her loved by many, but it did not bring her into sympathy with the life and aims of those around her. On the one hand, she was a dreamer; on the other, she was passionately fond of outdoor life, particularly of riding, where horse and rider were not limited to paths but might gallop where they wished.

Her father's mother had taken her at



her birth to bring up, and her childhood had been passed in the country, where the doctors said she must live if she were to grow strong. Her grandmother was a reserved, silent woman, who loved her grandchild but did not lavish caresses on her. Maggie, the Irish nurse, was the only one who spoiled her. From her grandmother Stephana learned not to be demonstrative; from her life in the country she came to know and love nature, and never afterward to be happy for any length of time in the city.

After her grandmother's death Stephana came to live with her father and his second wife. Having no children of her own, Mrs. Brennan's ambition for an illustrious alliance settled on the head of her husband's daughter from the moment the latter came into the house. She would have preferred a stepdaughter more like herself in manner of thought, but she was clever enough to see that the originality and subtle charm of the girl might accomplish what one more like herself could not, even backed by all her husband's money. She never challenged her stepdaughter to a direct contest of wills. And in only one respect did she fail to have her own way: Stephana never called her "mother."

With this new life came foreign governesses, who taught the child to speak French and Italian as she did her mother tongue, and fostered in her the charm she had inherited from her mother. She took to schooling obediently, without resistance or eagerness. But when it came to music her soul rose to meet it. In a few years she astonished those around her who understood music and aroused boundless enthusiasm in her master, who predicted a great future for her. At first Mrs. Brennan looked with complacency upon this pretty talent, until Stephana told her father that she wished to go abroad and devote herself to its cultivation.

This was the worst fright Mrs. Brennan had ever experienced. She had not taken such pains with the girl that music might be the richer. Into her husband's mind she managed to instil

the firm belief that if Stephana undertook the serious study of music her health would break down. It was after this that the three-thousand-acre ranch in California was purchased for Stephana, where she might indulge her love of horses and of outdoor life to the utmost.

Mrs. Brennan, with the quiet insistence which did not blazon its intentions but achieved its ends, managed to make her husband believe that the only suitable marriage for his daughter was with the nobility of England or of the Continent. She had inculcated this belief in him slowly during the years in which Stephana was growing up, until it became apparent to the girl that this was really his wish. Had she seen marital happiness, such as she sometimes dreamed of, in the set in which she moved, she might have stopped and considered whether this were fair to herself. What she saw, however, only discouraged dreams of romance, and she quietly resolved to marry to please her father.

When Stephana was eighteen years old her stepmother gave a huge affair for her formal entry into society. From then on she received the homage of the men around her. It was less her father's millions that attracted them than her own unobtrusive charm and her exquisite beauty, of which one never tired. And she received their admiration in so simple a way as almost to escape the envy of her less favored acquaintances.

Thus for the past four years she had been made love to by men of various nationalities and in several tongues. Yet, though she had made up her mind to marry to please her father, she could not help listening for the voice that should start her heart to singing in unison with it.

These were her thoughts this afternoon. She dismissed them with a little shrug as she rose to go out.

"You are romantic, my child," she apostrophized herself.

Her motor was ready, and downstairs in the hall the maid was waiting to wrap her in her furs.

It was a cold, crisp day, when the New York sky is as blue as Italy's and the air as bright and stimulating as the aspirations of youth. The wary chauffeur managed to obtain a maximum of speed with minimum danger of arrest; the cool air tearing at her veil reminded her of the wind when she galloped against it on horseback, and she forgot the troubles of the town.

On her return, after forty miles of exhilaration, the automobile was blocked at Seventy-second Street and Columbus Avenue. Her eyes fell upon a florist's window, and the sight reminded her of Mrs. Leigh, an old friend of her grandmother's, to whom she often carried flowers. She sprang from the car, and was back with her purchase from the florist's before the policeman had straightened out the tangle of vehicles.

As she was alighting at the family hotel where old Mrs. Leigh lived, a gust of wind whipped the long veil around her neck and caught the end on a projection of the machine. The wind was so strong that it almost blew her from her feet, and the filmy silk had become a rope to strangle her, when a musical voice behind asked permission to help her. A few deft turns of a strong hand set her free.

"Thank you very much," Stephana said; and raising her eyes to those of her rescuer, she met a pair of gray ones, with a light in them which for the moment held her captive.

Stephana did not lose her self-possession easily, yet now she stood still and gazed into the eyes of this stranger, oblivious, for the moment, that he *was* a stranger.

"I hope you are not hurt," he said.

The sound of the voice recalled her to herself.

"No, I thank you," she replied, and without further words went into the hotel.

When she was back again finally in her own room she sat with her hands folded in her lap and stared in front of her, seeing only the face of the man who had come to her rescue.

Presently there was a knock at the

door, and Mrs. Brennan came in, attired in a yellow creation which nobly assisted in the retention of the lady's never-to-be-relinquished youth. She sat down on the edge of a straight-backed chair, since the tightness of the dress would not permit of the slightest relaxation.

"Stephana, it is past five, and you are not yet dressed!" she said plaintively.

"I don't think I care to meet the Duke today. Say anything you like; invite him to dinner some time—only don't ask me to meet him today."

Mrs. Brennan rarely insisted with Stephana, but today she felt that she had a right to.

"Stephana, dear, don't you think, since it was prearranged, and the hour is here, that you ought to meet him? I don't think you can possibly refuse now."

Stephana sighed. The charm of her dream had been driven away by the worldly presence of her stepmother, and she agreed to dress at once and come down.

The maid came in at this instant to announce the arrival of the guests.

"Now, Stephana, you see they are here!" Mrs. Brennan's voice was pathetic.

The girl sprang to her feet contritely. "Go down to them, and I'll be with you in a minute. There really is no need of my changing my dress; I am quite captivating in this. I'll just take my hat off and fix my hair."

Mrs. Brennan brightened. "Yes, do come as you are. You look lovely, anyway. And, Stephana, dear, he really is very nice."

The matron hastened from the room as fast as her stateliness of manner would permit. Stephana went to her long mirror and raised her hands to take off her veil. It brought back the gray eyes to her. She hesitated, then dropped her hands and went downstairs without removing the filmy chiffon that had tried to strangle her.

In the drawing-room a tall man rose at her entrance. What happened immediately afterward she could never clearly recall, for he who stood before her was the stranger who had released



her from her predicament an hour before.

When she was alone again in her room she remembered vaguely that Mrs. Weatherbee-Jones had kissed her; that she had shaken hands with the Duke de Longtour; that he had sat beside her and talked—of California—of Touraine—of New York. Then for the first time she began to be conscious of what was happening to her, and it was so wonderful, so thrilling, that she could have cried for joy. She did cry, for her eyes were wet when the maid came to dress her for dinner.

She, who cared little for clothes, began to care for them that night. She was going to the Horse Show, and she might see him there. When she came down to dinner her stepmother exclaimed at her radiant beauty. Stephana did not dare look up and meet her eyes. She felt that the secret of her radiance could not help being read in her glance.

It was only toward the end of the evening, however, that the Duke came to their box; and Stephana, the self-assured and disdainful, was as shy as any schoolgirl. Mrs. Brennan, clever woman of the world that she was, failed utterly to read her stepdaughter aright. "At least, I never considered her stupid before," she thought to herself. "I wonder if the little idiot thinks she mustn't encourage him, because I told her the other day that she was too kind to the men she was going to reject?"

## II

WHEN Roland François Jean du Plessis de Longtour, Duc de Longtour, Duc de la Haute Vallée, Prince de Taulignac and Duc d'Aronville, was born, his father was still rich; and during his first twenty-two years Roland had lived in all the luxury habitual to the well-to-do French aristocrat. When he was a student at Oxford his father, having run his course, escaped further responsibility in this world by a bullet from a silver-mounted dueling pistol, and Roland found himself the head of

a ruined family, as noble as any in France. Though he was still the nominal owner of the De Longtour *hôtel* in Paris, and of the huge chateau in Touraine, with its private park and its thousands of acres of land, both properties were mortgaged up to the hilt. That the creditors did not dispossess the family from both was because they recognized a stronger guarantee of getting their money in the young Duke himself than in the forced sale of his estates. They believed that with his name and his personality he could make a marriage of the most advantageous sort, rehabilitate the family fortunes and pay his creditors in full. Moreover, his uncle, the Marquis de Chavonnay—reputed one of the shrewdest and richest noblemen in France—stood by the young man in a manner to hearten his creditors greatly; for, even before his father's sudden end, Roland had shown a steadiness and strength of character quite the reverse of that displayed by the last few generations of his line. Indeed, he loved his family with an old-fashioned adoration which made the De Longtour name almost a religion to him. That the last heads of the house had dragged the name in the mud and dissipated the once enormous fortune only added to his sense of responsibility.

The first thing Roland did after his father's death was to sell the latter's racing stable. He leased the *hôtel* in the Faubourg St. Germain, and took his mother and sisters to the chateau in Touraine which had belonged to the family since the fourteenth century. There he had plunged into the management of the estate with a fury of concentration which he could have obtained from no hired bailiff. But as year after year passed it became increasingly clear to him that, strive as he might, and deny himself and his family much of what their position rendered almost imperative, he could hope to do little more than pay the interest on the enormous debts his father had left; the principal would have to be liquidated and his sisters' dowries provided in some other way.

After seven years of desperate struggle, Roland realized that his only hope lay in marrying money. The idea was more distasteful to him than was natural in a country where the *dot* is looked upon as a regular part of the attractions of a marriageable young woman. Yet, pressed by his creditors, and urged by his mother to think of his sisters' dowerless condition, he finally resolved to go to America in search of an heiress. He could have married in France among the rich *bourgeoisie*. A number of advantageous propositions had indeed been made to him, but he could not bring himself to accept any of these. His pride revolted at the idea of marrying beneath him among his own people, while he could tolerate it among foreigners.

In America, with his letters of introduction and the charm of his grave youth and good looks, he found all doors open to him. The notions of luxury which he had brought with him from France were sadly upset by what he saw in Newport cottages, in Adirondack camps and in New York homes. He lost his sense of proportion, and in bewilderment wondered at times what the Americans would do next to satisfy that craving in their character which demanded the ever aspiring skyscraper, the ever increasing magnificence of their private homes.

Still, amid all this evidence of wealth, he did not seek any woman's hand. He hesitated, reluctant and uncertain. He liked the Americans tremendously. Unlike most foreigners, however, he felt a greater admiration for the men, with their lives of purposeful accomplishment, than he did for the women. The latter he found handsome and interesting; but their independence and cleverness did not attract him. He began to fear that he, who had always considered himself advanced in his ideas, was in reality old-fashioned.

Then Stephana Brennan came to New York and the Duke met her. To the general surprise of those who had previously entertained him, he asked Mr. Brennan for his daughter's hand two weeks afterward. He frankly ad-

mitted that he was poor, that his estates had been heavily mortgaged, and that he must receive money with his wife in order to give her the position to which she was entitled. In spite of, or it may be because of his frankness, Mr. Brennan liked this grave young man, who so ill accorded with the traditional ideas of a voluble Frenchman.

The American did not pretend to ignore the fact that in all such international marriages money played as important a part on the one side as title did on the other. When it came to his own daughter, however, he demanded further assurances. On the day on which he told the Duke that he would consider his proposal he went to his daughter's boudoir, a cozy nest that had cost enough to fit out an ordinary house.

"Stevie," he said abruptly as he sat down, "would you like to become the Duchess de Longtour?"

At the unexpected question Stephana blushed vividly. She sprang to her feet, and going around behind her father laid her soft cheek against the top of his head, where his searching eyes could not see her. She patted the grizzled head, and whispered:

"Yes, father."

That night the financier sent a long cable dispatch in cipher to his Paris bankers. The inquiries in it were not those which a money king of America might make concerning the standing of the aristocrat of another country with whom he contemplated a matrimonial alliance; they were the questions a father asks about the man his only daughter is going to marry.

When the reply came, Mr. Brennan sent for the Duke. He received him cordially, and told him that he was willing to accept him for his daughter's husband. "Would you rather that your lawyers should see me about certain other matters?" Mr. Brennan inquired.

"I have not thought of going to lawyers," the Duke answered.

"Then perhaps we can settle it ourselves in a few minutes," Mr. Brennan said briskly. "I believe firmly that



the chances for happiness in marriage are much increased if the husband's dignity is not hurt by having to go to his wife for money. Therefore, I intend to settle the same amount on my son-in-law as I shall on my daughter, namely, three million dollars each. That will be satisfactory?"

"It is very generous," the Duke replied. "And Mademoiselle Stephana—does she accept me?"

"You may ask her yourself. I will call her."

"Mademoiselle," said the Duke with an air of constraint when she greeted him, "I have your father's consent to ask you if you will trust your happiness to me."

She held out her hand.

He took it, and bending over brought it to his lips.

"Thank you, mademoiselle," he said simply. "I hope I may be able to make you happy." Further than this he made no declaration of love, did not even try to keep her hand.

When he was gone she covered her face with her hands. She was now his promised wife. But what a void there remained in her heart! She had anticipated so much that she had not received, and on this day, which should have been the happiest of her life, Stephana learned that happiness is never separated from pain.

### III

ON the morning of Stephana's wedding day the spirit of spring made an incursion against old winter. The world was bathed in sunshine, and the air caressed those whom often it drove bleakly before it. The newspapers, which since the engagement had kept the public posted on all the details of the coming event, were responsible for the great gathering which thronged the sidewalks from the magnate's mansion to the Cathedral.

Inside the church the Duke de Longtour stood waiting for his bride, with his cousin, Count Casimir d'Erouville,

on one side, and the French Ambassador on the other. As he looked down on the vast beflowered and beribboned space the French nobleman's taste was offended by the theatricalness of the display. Some of the sacredness of the ceremony seemed lost in the elaborate preparations for it.

When at last it was all over and he felt the fluttering little hand of his wife on his arm, he laid his own protectingly over it as they turned and walked out into the world together.

The lower floor of the Brennan mansion had been closed since the day of Stephana's engagement. It opened to receive the party returning from the Cathedral, and Roland drew a deep breath of amazement on entering it. The whole first floor had been transformed into an Italian garden, where flowers grew in abundance and fountains threw their spray into the air, while under various pergolas the wedding feast was spread on little tables.

"Isn't it a pretty idea?" Mrs. Brennan said to him confidentially.

"It is wonderful, madame," he answered soberly.

He had read in the newspapers some days before that the floral decorations of the church and house would cost a hundred thousand dollars, and had thrown the paper down in disgust at such a silly lie; but when he wandered about the marvelous first floor a feeling almost of anger possessed him at the sight of such utter prodigality.

He glanced about him to see what impression was made on the guests by this lavishing of gold. Apparently there was no more than is produced upon a spoiled child by one more toy.

Stephana's attitude was more of a shock to her husband than anything else. She took it so much as a matter of course that she did not even suspect the strong feelings one might have on the subject. Such things were commonplaces to her, and she moved as simply amid this barbaric splendor as his own mother might have moved about her garden. He felt frightened at the thought of removing this lovely

exotic from her surroundings to his chateau in the depths of Touraine. "She will be bored to death," he said to himself. "I shall have nothing to offer her in exchange for this gorgeousness."

As Roland stood amid the magnificence of the Italian garden and looked at his bride, he feared lest he should find himself as much out of sympathy with this slender and refined-looking girl as he felt himself to be with her friends. Everyone seemed to be out of harmony with him today. Even his cousin, D'Erouville, was laughing and enjoying himself more than anyone else, and Roland felt angrier with him than he did with the thoughtless Americans. He cursed his fortune, which had sent him here, a beggar, to barter his name for the condescending gold of barbarians. And, as if Fate were determined further to worry him, he heard someone ask Stephana if her trunks had already gone to the steamer.

"Only the trunks with my clothes," she replied carelessly. "The rest are to go today."

Roland felt himself stiffen. He had seen the trunks that had gone—a huge vanload. And they were only her clothes!

At that moment Stephana turned to him. "I am very tired," she said.

Roland drew her into a bower of clematis. She rested her head against the back of her seat and closed her eyes. Presently she smiled up at him.

"Why are you so solemn?" she asked.

"I was afraid, madame, that I might not be able to make you as happy in Touraine as I had hoped to."

When the big liner had received the last of its load of human beings and had lumbered with awkward dignity out into the Hudson, Stephana stood with her husband at the rail until they could no longer recognize the gay faces turned toward them from the pier. She was now alone with the man she had chosen to be her companion, perhaps her master. He was at her side, courteous as ever, yet still with the

coolness which, during their short courtship, had always baffled her. She had never believed it to be the coolness of indifference; it had always seemed to her to cover something she would like to learn.

She turned slowly and looked at him. The short afternoon was at an end, and the light was waning. She met his gray Basque eyes, and gazed earnestly into them, as if she would discover all the thoughts that lay behind them. What would her life be with him, whom she really knew so little; of whom everyone felt the charm, and yet who had been so little like a lover to her? She thought of the distant chateau to which he was taking her, and of his mother and sisters, who lived with him. Would they be kind to her? Then, as the gray eyes smiled down at her, she asked the question which subconsciously had taken possession of her of late:

"Why did you marry me?"

At that instant a gust of wind snatched the hat from the Duke's head and scurried with it along the deck.

Stephana's question remained unanswered.

#### IV

THE voyage was a rough one. At Havre the steamer was in time to catch the early morning train for Paris. Knowing that Roland wished to reach his home as soon as possible, Stephana assured him that she felt strong enough to go on to Touraine the same day.

From the railroad station where they alighted they still had a drive of several miles to the Chateau de Longtour. They started off rapidly through the dark winter night, a postilion galloping ahead of them. It made Stephana almost fancy she was back in medieval times, and the sensation was still further strengthened by finding a crowd of peasants in their odd garb assembled with torches at the entrance of the park to welcome their new *chatelaine*.

A half-mile inside the gates lay the chateau itself, lighted up for the Duke

and his bride. When Stephana entered the large hall she was met by the Dowager Duchess and her daughters, who welcomed her charmingly. Stephana felt a certain strain removed from her. She had dreaded this meeting, fearing lest her mother-in-law be a cold and haughty woman, with whom she could not be congenial. Instead, the woman who took her in her arms was sweet and motherlike, as unmistakably as she was *grande dame*. The oldest girl, Solange, was of the simple and affectionate French type, which appears almost childish beside the more self-possessed American. Her appearance of immaturity was increased by her slenderness, until one noticed how well developed her slight figure was. The twins, Valentine and Valérie, stood primly holding bouquets of roses. With the precision of mechanical toys they courted, and Valentine, carried away by Stephana's beauty, exclaimed:

"Little sister from across the sea, we love you already as if you were really our sister."

The sentimental little speech went straight to Stephana's heart, and she caught up the twelve-year-old in an embrace that sadly ruffled the child's mechanical, toylike dignity.

The next morning she woke early and sprang out of bed without waiting for the maid. She wished to take a peep into this new world which had become hers. Her rooms were spacious and high of ceiling, and everything in them was a complete contrast to her former home. At first they seemed to her to have an appearance of shabbiness. The furniture spoke of age, and the tapestries which covered all the walls of her boudoir were faded; yet there was a certain grandeur about it all which made up for the lack of modern luxury.

She drew back the heavy curtains from the long French windows and found that they opened on a narrow balcony or cornice, which seemed to run all around the building. No better means of exploration could be desired. She stepped out on it, and saw stretching away beneath her a wide view of

trim fields and precise patches of forest, while off in the distance she could barely discern the Loire, flowing down the valley in dignified leisure.

Stephana followed the narrow balcony till it rose in a flight of steps and wound around an old tower, then ended abruptly. She was drinking in the view, when she heard voices, apparently at a window just beneath her. Before she could make a move, she was frozen into stillness by a sentence referring to herself. She shrank back on the narrow balcony, not daring to move lest her presence be discovered. A few more words, and the sound of the voice receded from the window.

Stephana, all the eager light gone from her eyes, crept around the corner of the tower and down the steps, then swiftly sped to her own room. There she sat by the window and stared blankly out at the view that had pleased her so much a few minutes before.

So that was how her husband's family thought of her! "He has married beneath him . . . he had to marry for money." And again: "He will be kind to her . . . he will learn to love her . . ."

Of course she knew that the Duke de Longtour could not have married her had she been a poor girl; but somehow, when thus put into words by his sweet-faced mother, the facts were shameful. So *that* was why he had always been so cold and courteous! It had been mere barter, like other international marriages. Stephana cried drearily in her bridal chamber. She was not a sentimentalist, but because she loved the man she married she had never considered her union one of those brilliantly sordid affairs of bargain and sale.

She did not cry long. She pressed her lips resolutely together and, drying her eyes, viewed the situation with something of the coolness which characterized her father. For an hour Stephana sat like a statue in her room. In that hour she seemed to herself to have grown from thoughtless girlhood to hopeless womanhood. Her life was

turned to tragedy, and she could not conceive that there could ever be any more happiness for her.

The maid came in tentatively at the door.

"Monsieur le Duc, madame, is waiting to see you," she said.

"I am quite ready to receive him," Stephana said with ominous calm.

He entered, holding out both hands to her. "I suppose he is dutifully beginning to try to love me," she thought scornfully. "Good morning, Duke de Longtour," she said.

Her head was held high, and there was a hardness in her voice which caused him momentary surprise.

"Will you not give me your hand?" he asked, smiling.

She shrugged her shoulders. "I have already said good morning."

Roland's mood was too joyous to take offense. "It was not so enthusiastic a greeting as I had expected on the first morning in your new home. Come!"

His gray eyes danced with sunshine, and even now Stephana found something in her responding to the look in his eyes, the caressing tones of his voice. She summoned all her womanly pride to her aid, and took a step toward him, intending to tell him on what footing they should have to meet in the future.

Roland misunderstood the movement and caught her in his arms.

Furiously Stephana tore herself from his embrace and faced him. Sheer passion made her wordless, at first; then she burst forth:

"Duke de Longtour, let us have no more scenes like this!"

There could no longer be any doubt that she was in earnest.

"Why, what do you mean?" he asked.

"I mean that we might as well understand each other once and for all." Stephana's voice was steady now in a way that surprised even herself. "We both had a duty to perform to our families. You had to meet the financial demands of yours; I had to gratify the social ambitions

of mine. You have the money now; I have the title: we are quits. Let us not pretend that there is any more we can give to each other. In that way we shall at least keep our self-respect."

She turned carelessly from him with these words and went to the window. Roland grew white behind her back. He made a move as if to follow and expostulate with her, then checked the impulse.

Stephana, intensely aware of his every movement, knew that he stood still for quite ten seconds. Then she heard the door of her boudoir open and close, and knew that she was alone.

## V

STEPHANA stood without moving for some time. She felt a sense of disappointment that he had not tried to justify himself, though had he done so she would have scorned his explanation. Still, his silent acquiescence was additional proof that she had read nothing into his mother's words which did not belong there.

Presently she let down her hair and began brushing it. In her misery she had to find some work for her hands to do. As she was doing up her hair again, the maid brought in a tray with her breakfast.

Before Stephana had finished her meal, Pélagie came to ask if the Dowager could come to her.

A moment later Madame de Longtour came in, followed by Pélagie and François, bearing a large carved chest.

"My child," she said, kissing the unresponsive girl, "I had hoped that you would sleep late. I wish that you had rested better."

"I feel very well, thank you," Stephana answered.

"Here is your *corbeille de nocés*, little one," the Dowager went on, pointing to the chest. "Everything in that has belonged to the former Duchesses de Longtour. Some of them have been happy, some not; but we hope that the new Duchesse will be very happy."

"Here is the coronet, which has be-



longed to the family since the time of Francis the First. It has been worn by all the Duchesses on state occasions.

"All those things," the Dowager went on, indicating the chest with its contents of laces, brocades and jewelry, "as well as the estate itself, were saved by the Comte d'Aragon, who was the third brother of the Duc de Longtour at the time of the first Revolution. The Duc emigrated to England, and with his family suffered the privations which the nobles underwent for the cause of the monarchy. But, 'Citoyen Daragon,' as he was known, espoused the cause of the Revolution, took possession of the family property and saved it from confiscation. Citoyen Daragon afterward became again Comte d'Aragon. At his death he left everything to his brother, under the one condition that he should return to France and promise never to expatriate himself again. It was a great and rich estate then."

The Dowager paused with a sigh. Stephana had been listening with her eyes cast down. At first she had told herself that she was not interested in these details, which concerned her only in so far as her money was a prop to the fallen fortunes of a house forced to stoop to such assistance. But gradually, as she listened, she found her aloofness fading away. Whether she were happy or miserable, she herself had become a part of history. As the Comte d'Aragon had become Citoyen Daragon to save the De Longtour estate from passing out of the hands that had so long held it, so she had become a means of preventing its falling into the hands of the money lenders.

"The last three Ducs," the Dowager continued sadly, "have done their best to impoverish it. When Roland became the head of the family, it was a great tangle of debts that he found."

The Dowager leaned over and caressed Stephana's hair. "Dear child, you have married the best Duc de Longtour that has ever lived. I do not say so because he is my son; but I have known the men of this family and the history of the dead ones."

Stephana sat silently while the Dowager was speaking, and thought bitterly how these words would have appealed to her had she heard them yesterday instead of today. Yet her imagination could not help being affected, and she began to appreciate for the first time the responsibilities that went with the possession of a great name. Roland, Duc de Longtour, could not start to carve out a career as clerk or miner—as the son of a workman might. His life was marked out for him before he was born; he had come into the world with the yoke of great obligations about his neck, and this yoke must now be assumed by his wife, Stephana.

Drawn by an impulse she did not quite comprehend herself, she leaned over and kissed his mother.

"I do not understand your ways and your point of view," she said, "but if you will help me, I, too, may make a good Duchesse."

Madame de Longtour drew the girl's dark head down to her own breast and kissed it.

"I do not see how he can help loving you," she murmured to herself, not realizing that the girl understood the trend of her thoughts, and that a renewed wave of misery and revolt overwhelmed her at the words.

## VI

STEPHANA went down to luncheon with a certain amount of trepidation. After her reception of her husband in the morning she feared some awkwardness in their next meeting. His exquisite, though formal courtesy, however, prevented any embarrassment in the situation; and in the eyes of his family there was nothing remarkable in a certain degree of formality between a newly married husband and wife. She found him awaiting her at the foot of the marble staircase. Solange, too, was there, and kissed her on both cheeks with affectionate warmth.

In the large dining room, whose tall windows, reaching almost to the ceiling, looked out upon a marble terrace,

the Dowager herself conducted her daughter-in-law to the head of the table.

Stephana protested against depriving Roland's mother of her seat, but the Dowager laughingly said: "No, my child; this is yours. You are now the Duchesse de Longtour, and I—her mother."

The twins, demure and silent, looked upon Stephana and her pretty frock with adoring eyes; and finally Valentine—first punctiliously asking permission to speak at table—said enthusiastically:

"Brother, you wrote us that little sister from across the sea was like a white rose; but *I* think that she is like a whole garden of flowers; for her eyes are like brown pansies, and she has a pink rose in each cheek, and—"

Roland interrupted with a laugh, and turned to his wife, who was blushing furiously at the undiluted compliment. "Madame, I must warn you that Valentine is a kind of poet, and if you do not sternly repress her she will be writing verses to you."

They all laughed. The incident, however, helped to remove whatever constraint there was in the situation for Stephana.

After luncheon the Curé called, bringing a friend with him, to pay his respects. They assembled in the library, which was also the music room. Solange served the coffee and took up her embroidery, while all began to discuss politics and public matters with an interest that astonished Stephana. She had never seen people come together for the mere pleasure of exchanging ideas. In the gay American society to which she was accustomed the conversation was confined to the trivial doings and scandals of its own particular set, and the discussion of the happenings of the great outer world would have been considered tremendously boring. She was further surprised to find that, although Solange had not seen nearly so much of the world as she had herself, and had practically lived her whole life in the depths of Touraine, she was quite well

informed on literary and even on political topics, and could take an intelligent part in the conversation with these cultivated men. "I," Stephana reflected with mortification, "can tell the name of our President; but I wonder if there is another thing I know about our political system—except that we are a republic? *I do* know that." Yet she found herself included in the conversation with a tact that she could not help admiring.

That night at dinner the Dowager said to Stephana: "You will put on your wedding gown tonight, will you not? There is a bridal service, you know, in the chapel."

Just before nine o'clock, Stephana, in her bridal attire, came down the staircase. The Curé and the whole family were awaiting her, the servants standing up along the wall.

There was a hush of admiration as she appeared.

"Oh, little sister! Oh! Oh!" Valentine cried when she caught sight of her.

The Duke stepped forward and gave her his hand. He saw that she was more nervous than she had been on the day of her wedding.

"There will be no keeping Valentine down to prose at all after this," he whispered to her.

When the mass was over the nobility and the peasants, from leagues around, came up to wish her happiness. Then, while the aristocracy went into the chateau, the peasants betook themselves to the servants' quarters, where there was equally ample provision for their entertainment.

The spacious rooms of the chateau were filled with merry, unassuming French people of unmistakable breeding, kindly, and frankly curious about Roland's American bride, who had come to restore the fortunes of his house.

It all became a confused mass of gaiety and brightness to Stephana, in which she sometimes forgot that she was not the contented bride she appeared to be, and for a few minutes at a time was happy. It was on a

much simpler scale than the entertainments of Mrs. Brennan and her friends, although most of these guests had titles, many of them had wealth, and some of them had names that the world knew of. Yet throughout the evening there was to Stephana a franker note of enjoyment in the merry-making than she had ever known.

## VII

STEPHANA'S first day in Touraine was kaleidoscopic in its experiences; and the emotions which accompanied them were varied and contradictory. At moments it seemed as if she must have dreamed the miserable words she had overheard on the tower. Again, they stood out as the only significant incident of the day. Sleep did not come to her easily that night, and in the crawling hours of the darkness her position presented different tormenting aspects to her imagination. Her husband was an enigma. After her reception of him in the morning, why had he not displayed anger, or at least resentment toward her? Throughout the day he had shown only formal courtesy and almost playful friendliness. Had he then accepted her terms without protest? He had made her a duchess, and she had endowed him with a fortune; were they indeed quits, and was this the end of her romance?

Stephana was not an introspective girl. She was blessed with the ability to look at the world objectively. Thus she had escaped the vice of the thoughtful unemployed, who study themselves, their moods and the world's attitude toward them until their minds become warped. Nevertheless, in the long, gray hours of her first winter in Touraine, she began to know herself as she never had in the whirl of her life in America; and with her self-study came the knowledge that, whether she willed it or not, she could not cease to care for the man to whom she was married. Rather, her love for him grew stronger the more she wished—

or tried to wish—that it might cease. At times she even had a sense of physical weakness when he came near her, and it humiliated her in her own esteem to feel that the man who had married her from merely mercenary motives could thus enthrall her. How she now blessed her habitual reserve! She had so long been accustomed to keeping her feelings to herself that it was easier than it might have been to another girl to maintain the cold indifference of manner she was striving for.

On the Duke's part, there were days when he seemed to want a better understanding. Sometimes she would have a sense of comradeship with him that was very dear, until the hateful suspicion would intrude that he was striving dutifully to be kind to her, as part of his side of the bargain.

On one occasion she burst forth petulantly:

"Pray, why do you struggle so hard to be kind to me?"

"Do I strike you as having to try very hard to be kind to you?" he asked, smiling.

Stephana caught the gleam in his eyes. He was laughing at her. She had become ridiculous to him.

"Do you think it necessary to play the part of a devoted husband for the sake of appearances?" she asked cuttingly. "Let us be natural with each other. After a while people will get used to our way of living, and there will be no further need of pretense."

The Duke paced the length of the room twice, his brows knitted. Without looking at her he said: "That you might not care for me, I can quite understand; but that you could not even have a friendly feeling for me, I confess I should not have thought possible. I could not have imagined that you would contract a marriage which would do justice neither to your taste nor to your intelligence."

"How about your own marriage?" she asked harshly.

He was silent for some time. "I at least like you," he answered in a low tone.

Stephana threw back her head and laughed. "You could bring yourself to love me, too, in time, I dare say. Why not? Frenchmen can love several women for a pastime—why not one for three million dollars? And I, of course," she went on passionately, "would return your love for every one of your pretty titles. Let me see if I can say them all—Roland du Plessis, Duke de Longtour, Duke de la Haute Vallée, Prince—"

Roland strode up to his wife, and grasped her in a grip of whose strength he was utterly unconscious.

"You think you may insult me with impunity," he said hoarsely, "because of the three million dollars which spell my ignominy to you. If you were a man I should kill you, but you are only a woman, and—"

He brought her to him with a force that held her powerless, kissed her full on the lips twice, and flinging her from him, went from the room.

The Duke's outburst was so sudden, so unexpected, that Stephana stood where he had flung her, almost stunned. And though he had kissed her in place of killing her—had she been a man—she could not make herself feel angry at the remembrance of his lips on hers. Twice he had kissed her! Had she been unable to turn her head aside before the second one—or had she not wished to? She did not know.

Late that afternoon he sent her this message: "I am going to Paris tonight on business."

### VIII

AFTER the Duke had gone away a spirit of restfulness gradually descended upon his wife. Stephana seemed to become more completely one of the family. She found a place for herself, also, in the domestic duties, volunteering to teach the twins English, which the Duke had previously done, in a more or less methodic manner, as his other duties permitted. Stephana's comical flounderings along the paths of pedagogy brought her

and her pupils very near to each other. The three were more like children, seeking the way of learning together, than like mistress and scholars.

The letters from her husband during his absence were events in the family, and were usually read aloud. In one of them he mentioned Raoul de Nerac.

"But if Raoul is in Paris, why does he not come to see us?" Valérie asked, interrupting.

Stephana happened to be looking at Solange, and saw the blood fly to her cheeks; and for the rest of the meal the girl did not raise her eyes from her plate.

Later, in her room, Stephana took Solange by the shoulders and peered into her eyes.

"Why have you never told me about Raoul?" she demanded, giving her a reproachful little shake.

Again the red flag of shame appeared.

"I—I—" she stammered.

"You—you—what?" Stephana mocked.

"I should like to tell you, if I may," she whispered. "Often I have wanted to, but—"

"Come here!" Stephana led her to a comfortable old sofa, not too near the light; and there they snuggled down with the satisfaction with which two young women enter upon a conversation about a man.

"I—I did not know the way Raoul felt until the Baron le Manoir—"

"And who is he, pray?" Stephana interrupted.

"Oh, he is an old gentleman who asked for my hand," Solange explained casually. "He had been married twice before and had one son; but he is very rich, and would marry me without any *dot*. Mamma said that in a few years the twins would grow up, and it would be dreadful to have us all unmarried, and she tried to persuade Roland to consent to the marriage; but Roland said I would be happier with some young man, even if it were a *mésalliance*—"

Solange broke off, blushing violently, then hurried on, hoping that Stephana had not noticed.



"Last spring I went to Paris for a month with my aunt, as I always do, and all the time they were talking about my marriage. My aunt said that it was a great piece of luck, considering that I had not a penny and that I was getting older every day—you know I shall be twenty-two in a few months."

"And what did *you* think about this marriage?" Stephana asked.

Solange dropped her eyes. "I had been very silly, you know, thinking about Raoul de Nerac, whom I had known ever since we were children. But of course I knew that I could never marry him. He had not asked for me, and he was only in the diplomatic corps. He is a viscount, and his title—"

Again Solange broke off abruptly.

Stephana laughed a hard little laugh. "Go on, my dear. Of course his title will bring him money. There are always girls who want to buy a title."

"Please, please, Stephana, don't speak in that way! I only meant that with his name and position he would naturally marry a rich girl. I was too poor for him."

"Did he know you cared for him?"

Solange looked wide-eyed at Stephana. "I had never said anything to anyone of him. I had only been thinking of him."

"I suppose he is very good-looking?" Stephana suggested.

"I think he is, and he was with Roland at Oxford, and Roland says he has fine principles."

"Is he as handsome as Roland?" Stephana asked.

"Oh, no! You know, Roland was considered the handsomest man in Paris. They used to call him *le beau et dédaigneux Roland*."

"Why did they call him *dédaigneux*?"

"I suppose because he did not wish to marry the women they proposed to him. The greatest offers were made to him from the rich *bourgeoisie*. His name is the oldest in France, and the noblest, except royalty. But Raoul's

name is old, too; and he could expect money with his wife, as he has very little—enough to live on himself, but not with a wife. When I was in Paris he came, too, and we saw each other at a ball. I was very pretty that night," she added shyly.

Stephana let her arm slip from the back of the sofa around Solange, and gave her a sympathetic hug. "Of course you were. You are always pretty."

Solange blushed. "But not so pretty as you," she said sincerely. "When Roland wrote about you from America he said you were the most lovely girl in America, and he was sure we should love you. We thought—"

Solange was always finding herself in the middle of a sentence she could not finish.

"You thought it was a love match," Stephana ended scornfully. "You were quite surprised to find it only a *mariage de convenance*."

Solange gazed sadly at the young Duchess. "Stephana, dear, mamma does not wish me ever to touch on the subject with you; but she says she is sure everything will come right in the end."

"Don't bother about it," Stephana said, with a manner of extreme carelessness.

"No, I won't; only—you—you are so lovely."

"Tell me about the ball." Stephana dismissed her own affairs from the conversation.

"Oh, yes! That night Raoul danced with me three times, and I felt—I felt— He said to me at last: 'Is it true that you are going to marry the Baron le Manoir?' I said I did not know—that Roland had not consented, but that my mother and everybody else thought it a good chance. His eyes were so burning when I said this that I could not look at them. Then he asked: 'If Roland gives his consent, will you marry him?' By that time I hardly knew what I was saying but, oh, I was so happy when he exclaimed: 'Solange, you are a monster!'

"You know that I love you, and if you marry the Baron I will kill myself!"

Solange hid her face in Stephana's shoulder from pure ecstasy at the remembrance.

"And what did you say to him?"

"I told him I would never, never marry Baron le Manoir, nor anyone else, now that I knew he loved me. We were *so* happy after that, until Raoul spoke to Roland. He wanted to give up his career and go with me to some small town in the provinces to live; but Roland said that after the first we should be very unhappy, and that our children would have no chance, and that if Raoul were to give up his career he would soon learn to hate the woman who had made him give it up. And so," Solange ended, "he advised Raoul to go back to his work and forget me."

"The brute!" Stephana muttered.

Solange drew back from her. "Roland knows the world better than we do," she said severely. "He said it was better to live without one's ideal than to see that ideal crumble to pieces. But I became quite ill, and was in bed for weeks. Roland came every day and sat by my bedside and told me I must be brave and get well. He said we could never tell how things were going to turn out—and what he said was true."

Stephana was sitting with her head on her hand. Her eyes were on the floor, and she was glad she did not have to look at Solange at this moment. It must have been just after this illness that Roland had come to America for a rich wife. She felt a spasm of hatred for the girl whose love affair had been the innocent cause of her tragedy.

With an effort she managed to crush down the feelings which she knew to be unjust to Solange. "And now, I suppose, your marriage is all arranged?" she asked.

"I—I hope it soon will be," Solange said, rosy with happiness. "There is a chance for Raoul to get a very good post in Pekin, if he marries a girl who can help him to keep up the position."

"Is that why Roland went to Paris?"

"He did not say. I hope it is."

"And I will give you your wedding, dear, and your trousseau," Stephana exclaimed, making amends for the unkind thoughts she had harbored against her.

There was a knock at the door, and Valérie came in to say that her mother wished to see Solange.

The two girls went downstairs. They found the Dowager holding a letter in her hand and looking troubled.

Solange grew pale. "Is anything the matter, mamma?"

"I have just had a letter from Roland, and he encloses one to you. You had better take it to your room to read."

She drew her daughter to her, kissed her, and the girl, as if walking in her sleep, went from the room with the letter in her hand.

Stephana turned to the Dowager.

"There is some trouble about Solange; what is it?"

The older woman sighed. "It is hard to understand, but I suppose Roland has his reasons."

"Oh, bother Roland!" Stephana cried. "Must the earth revolve around his wishes?"

"I think, when you reflect on what you have just said, you will see how wrong it is," the Dowager said with stern reproof. "I think we had better wait till he comes."

Stephana burst into a peal of hysterical laughter and hurried out into the garden, fearing lest tears should follow the laughter.

The Dowager looked after her with troubled eyes. "I had hoped they would grow together," she murmured, shaking her head sadly, "but I do not know—" She joined her delicate hands together and looked upward. "*Mon Dieu, ayez pitié d'elle—et de lui!*" she prayed.

## IX

STEPHANA went to her room, feeling herself for the first time an outsider. With moodily rebellious eyes she stood by the long window and looked out into the dusk.

"I suppose," she mused, "we get what we deserve in life. I never made myself a part of my stepmother's household, and I shall never be a part of my husband's. I ought to have been satisfied with the crumbs of love, instead of wanting a whole loaf and getting nothing."

She stood thus with wide, staring eyes and unhappy thoughts, until the door flew open and Valentine rushed in, and then stopped with equal suddenness.

"Oh, *mon Dieu!* If Roland were here I should have to go out and come in again like a lady. Solange and Valérie always do naturally what Roland wants," Valentine explained ruefully, "but I can't. However, I think Solange is now actually angry at our brother. I was in her room, just now, and she was crying and saying that Roland was cruel— Oh!" Valentine clapped her hand tightly over her mouth, then continued through her fingers: "But I must not speak of Solange, mamma says."

Valentine clasped her little hands over her heart and gazed scrutinizingly at Stephana. In the dusk the child's eyes looked more than ever like her brother's, and Stephana leaned forward and kissed them.

"Casimir d'Erouville sent Valérie and me each a new doll today," Valentine went on. "I was ever so glad to get it—only poor Solange is so miserable about her mar—" The little hand was clapped over her mouth again. "Please, Stephana, don't let me talk. I just came to ask you if you would come to supper with us—I mean will you come and *sit* with us? Mamma is with Solange, and Valérie is crying because Solange is. She says I am cruel to think of supper and my new doll when poor Solange says she is going to die. But mamma says Roland will make everything right in the end, and that is a great comfort to know."

"You think your brother will set the whole world right, don't you?"

"You asked that in such a funny way—as if you didn't think so."

"Then you do?"

"He always has done what he said he would."

Stephana went down and stayed with the little ones during their meal. At her own dinner, later, Solange did not appear. Afterward Stephana slipped up to Solange's room. She found Solange with her face swollen with weeping. Stephana knelt by her bedside.

"Solange, I wish you would tell me what the matter is," she urged.

Solange's tears started anew at the sympathy. "Mamma does not want me to," she wailed.

"I don't see why you don't tell me, anyway. You know I shall be told sooner or later."

"Perhaps you will misunderstand Roland and call him names—I did myself this afternoon."

"Well, tell me, does Raoul want to break his engagement?"

"No, no! How can you think so evil of him? It is Roland who says he cannot yet give me a dowry. He was to have given me a million francs, you know. He says now that we must wait—and Raoul must go back to his old position. And, oh, I am not even to see Raoul now! And he is losing such a good opportunity in Pekin—and I don't know if I shall *ever* be married!" There was a fresh outburst of tears.

"A million francs," Stephana said to herself; "that's less than two hundred thousand dollars. Listen, Solange! Stop crying and get up and send a telegram to Raoul to come here at once. I will give you your dowry and your trousseau, and you can be married whenever you choose."

"You will give me a—a million francs?" She looked at Stephana as if she thought her suddenly demented.

"Of course I will. My father gave me enough so that I can easily do it. It may bring me luck and make you happy," she ended lightly.

"You darling! You very best of sisters!" Solange was laughing and crying and hugging Stephana almost beside herself with joy when the Dowager came into the room.

"What is all this, my children?" she asked.

"Solange has told me all about it," Stephana answered, "and I am going to give her her dowry. I made her tell me," she added.

The Dowager looked at her daughter reproachfully. "You ought not to have disobeyed."

"Really, mamma," Stephana protested, "is it fair that I should not be trusted?"

"My child, it is kind of you; but Roland is the head of the family, and it was his desire that you should not know. I explained this to Solange. I am sorry she did not respect the wishes of her brother."

"Well, I am glad she didn't, because now I can make it all right," Stephana said stubbornly.

The Dowager shook her head. "It is very kind of you, but I cannot let Solange accept the money unless Roland approves. He has made great sacrifices for us, and the least we can do is to consult his wishes."

"Part of his great sacrifice in making a *mésalliance* was to give a dowry to Solange, was it not?" Stephana asked hotly.

"Stephana," the Dowager cried in horror, "you must not speak like this. You are the Duchesse de Longtour, and the Duchesse de Longtour is above criticism. Neither must you call Roland du Plessis's marriage a *mésalliance*. The Duc de Longtour makes his wife his equal."

Stephana shrugged her shoulders scornfully. "If he had married into your nobility there would not have been this talk of his making sacrifices."

"I am sure I could never have loved anyone else better than I do you." The Dowager took a step nearer her and held out her hand appealingly. "Have I made you feel all this?"

"Not by your manner—but I know you think it," Stephana retorted.

The older woman shook her head, tears in her eyes. "My own mother was a simple Basque, and we were very proud of her. She made a dignified and lovely marquise—better than

most of the noblest born. It is what a woman makes of her position as a married woman that counts to her husband, to her children and to the society into which she is called."

She came up to Stephana and caressed the cheeks flaming with rebellion.

"You will know all this better when you have been here a little longer," she said gently.

## X

THE Dowager wrote to her son that night, telling him of Stephana's offer. Two days later he arrived at his home unexpectedly. Valentine ran up to Stephana with the news.

"And whom do you suppose he has brought with him?" she demanded.

"Raoul?" Stephana guessed.

"No—much nicer than that. He has brought our cousin, Casimir d'Erouville, who was with him in America. He is Roland's best friend. He is not a bit like his brother, Ferdinand de Tournelles."

"I did not know Casimir had a brother," Stephana said absent-mindedly.

"He is not exactly a brother—he's only a half-brother. You will see him some day. He and Casimir don't like each other very much, I think. But he is a great friend of Robert de Brissac—he's another cousin, you know. You will like Robert; he is so jolly, and—bubbling." She dropped her voice mysteriously. "I think he is always in love with some lady."

Stephana laughed, but she wished to see her husband, to speak about Solange; and, to Valentine's disappointment, she was sent off to ask the Duke to come to his wife as soon as he could.

A few minutes later he entered the room. "I am sorry you had to send for me," he said. "I should have been here before, but my mother wished to speak to me about Solange."

"Won't you sit down?" Stephana found herself unexpectedly glad to see him. "I also wish to speak to you



about Solange. I made her tell me all about Raoul and herself, although she did not wish to disobey you. I hope you will not make any objections to my giving her her dowry."

His gaze avoided her as he answered: "It is very kind of you to wish to do this, but I think it is better for her not to be married just now."

"Then it is not the matter of money which prevents the marriage?" she persisted.

"I would rather not say what the reason is."

Stephana clasped her hands nervously in her lap.

"In name, at least," she began slowly, "I am the Duchess de Longtour; that is to say, the other member of our partnership. Every question that touches your family touches me. Don't you think it only fair that I should know and be permitted to discuss the reason for certain decisions?"

Roland shook his head.

"I am afraid you do not understand France. There is but one head of the family here, and that is the man. My mother and sisters accept my decision without discussing it; may I not ask my wife to do the same?"

He rose with a certain definiteness in his manner, as if the discussion were to be carried no further. But the whole question of money was so sore a subject to Stephana that she would not permit her desire to help Solange to be thus cavalierly dismissed by one who himself had sufficiently profited by her father's money.

"I thought you married me principally to provide for your sisters' future," she remarked.

An angry red crept into the man's face. His eyes blazed as she had never seen them before. Then, when Stephana was expecting an outbreak, his expression changed; the lines around his mouth relaxed, and he looked at her with good-humored amusement, which angered her more than any resentment of his could have done.

"You have the money now; why do you refuse to help Solange?" she continued sneeringly.

Roland turned, as if to go without answering her. Then he faced her squarely.

"The reason I do not give a dowry to my sister is because I have no money."

"No money! And may I ask what you have done with the three million dollars my father paid you to marry me?"

Roland drew a long breath, like one who has laid down a heavy burden.

"I have had every dollar of it made over to you, and I am a poor man as I was before—but free, madame!" he said, with a note of exultation in his voice. "You no longer have the right to insult me. If you do"—his eyes gleamed mockingly—"I shall kiss you."

Stephana stood petrified. She could hardly grasp the full sense of his words. Of all the possibilities which she had brooded over, this alone had never occurred to her.

Very slowly, as if on her perfect enunciation depended her comprehension of the situation, she asked:

"You have given me back all the money?"

"Yes."

"But—did you not come to America to marry money?"

"I did," Roland answered steadily. "It was only after I brought you here and you spoke to me the way you did that I realized the intolerable position a man places himself in who accepts money from a woman having nothing else to give. Oh, yes, I beg your pardon; you did have insults to give. That is why I cannot permit any member of my family to take money from you."

Stephana stared at him, still only half comprehending. "But since you are giving me back my money," she said at length, with a little catch in her voice, "the only decent thing for me to do is to give you back your title."

"Oh, no!" he cried eagerly. "You are no less my wife because you have ceased to be my creditor. I am very glad that I have something to give which you care for. It is a very good

title, too," he went on with that gleam in his eyes which she had come to know and to fear; "very old and very noble. In market value it is really worth more than three millions—but I give it to you for nothing. You are now, madame, in my debt, not I in yours, and that is as it should be."

The red now crept into Stephana's cheeks. She gazed at the man before her in wonderment.

"There is always divorce," she stammered.

For an instant the Duke became serious. "Divorce?" he repeated. "What have I done to you that you should seek a divorce? You have prescribed the relations that should be between us, and I have lived up to them. Have I illtreated you?" The light of mischief danced again in his eyes. "Have I beaten you? The only thing you could bring against me is that I am poor—but I was poor when you married me."

He threw back his head and laughed, a laugh of boyish enjoyment, the first she had ever heard from him. As she stood confused before him, he went on cheerfully:

"Isn't the title as good as it was guaranteed to be—the chateau as old and moth-eaten as it was represented?"

"This is intolerable!" she cried.

In a tumult of feeling she walked up and down the room. The Duke watched her. Once he made a move as if to go to her, then stopped and remained where he was.

At last she turned to him.

"What do you expect me to do?" she asked.

"Do? Why, nothing, except to come down and see Casimir d'Erouville, who is impatiently awaiting you. If you do not make haste, he will think he is not welcome. I had some difficulty, as it was, in persuading him that he would not be *de trop*—in our honeymoon."

## XI

STEPHANA was left in a conflict of varied emotions. The Duke had given her back the money for which he had

married her, yet he would not let her relinquish the title, would not let her set him free to marry someone who had more to give than money alone. She could not help smiling, as she recalled his recommendations of the title and the chateau. She owed him all now and he owed her nothing. The position of debtor had a strange sweetness that that of creditor had never possessed.

The perplexed thoughts which assailed her did not delay her dressing, and the maid found her most exacting about her appearance. Nature had favored Stephana above the average, and when to her natural attractions she added those provided by a French dressmaker, the result was one to give joy to the heart of man. So Casimir thought when she came down to welcome him in the library, where he was holding the twins enthralled with descriptions of America. To Stephana he seemed like an old friend in a foreign country. She liked the young fellow, with his quick, boyish movements and the beard of respectability with which Frenchmen disguise their youth.

The twins were utterly obliterated from Casimir's mind. He sprang up with the *empressement* of the man of his race, which makes a woman feel, for the moment, that she is of more importance to him than anything else in the world. He grasped both of Stephana's hands, and almost dropping on his knees, kissed the finger tips first of one hand and then of the other.

"And how do we find Touraine?" he inquired.

"Delightful."

"Not homesick for the—what you call them?—skyseekers of New York?"

"No," Stephana smiled. "I didn't live in a skyscraper."

"Ah, yes, 'skyscraper,' scrape the sky—I remember now. Perhaps to you the tall Roland, he scrapes the sky?"

Dinner was a merry meal. Solange was so radiant at the thought that Raoul would soon be with her, and

Casimir from the mere joy of living, that they swept Roland and Stephana along with them on the current of their good spirits. Just as they were finishing the meal there was the sound of wheels on the driveway, and a few minutes later François brought his master a card.

Roland raised one eyebrow as he glanced at it. "My interesting cousin, Robert," he said, glancing at Casimir.

"De Brissac?" asked the Dowager.

"Yes."

"Is he in any new trouble?" she asked anxiously.

"There was a not very pretty story in circulation in Paris about him. I did not have time to find out the truth of it. I knew we should hear from him soon enough if it were true," he said drily.

The Dowager turned to Stephana. "The Comte de Brissac is my only brother's only son. He should have been the first to pay his respects to you, but"—she shrugged her shoulders—"he appears, usually, when he wishes some help."

But De Brissac had anything but the air of a suppliant when he burst in upon them at this juncture, not waiting for the return of François.

"My dear aunt, and Solange!" he cried, kissing them impetuously on both cheeks. "And this is my new cousin from America, is it not?" He held out both hands to Stephana, and only a certain reserve on her part prevented her, too, receiving the cousinly embrace.

"Ah, how I am punished for not having come before!" he went on, with a look of frank admiration, which wandered with equal satisfaction from Stephana to the reflection of his own small-waisted figure in the mirror set in the door. He twisted his mustache with a white hand elegantly jeweled.

"You will stay and smoke a cigarette with us, Robert?" Roland suggested, as the ladies were leaving the dining room.

In spite of his gay air De Brissac gulped down his liqueur and chewed the end of his cigarette with a nerv-

ousness he could not hide. Roland watched him quizzically. Casimir had lost his loquacity, and blew smoke rings toward the ceiling with entire concentration of purpose. He did not like De Brissac, and did not make much attempt to conceal the fact.

For some minutes De Brissac rattled on with the gossip of the boulevards, until his vivacity gradually weakened under the silence of the other two.

"And how is it you are able to tear yourself away from your beloved Paris?" Roland asked finally.

"Well—er—to tell the truth—"

"Yes, to tell the truth," Roland murmured.

"You *are* a pleasant host, Roland. If you do not want me to spend a few days with you, why—" He half rose.

"Sit down; there's no train till midnight," Roland answered coldly. "As to my wishing you to stay—it all depends on what caused your abrupt departure from Paris."

De Brissac wriggled uncomfortably in his chair and glanced at Casimir's silent figure.

The latter rose. "I will join the ladies," he said.

"I say, Roland, you are as bad as my father. You are always attributing some motive to one's actions," Robert grumbled when they were alone.

"I heard a story about you the other day, when I was in Paris," Roland said slowly. "I can't say I have much hope that it is wholly untrue."

De Brissac sprang to his feet. "If you won't believe a word I say I might as well leave the house at once," he said angrily.

"You might as well tell me now what brought you here; you will tell me sooner or later," Roland replied imperturbably. "Was what I heard in Paris about you and Madame Valfroy true?"

De Brissac sat down suddenly, all his bluster gone. He was quite pale, and poured himself a glass of liqueur. He gulped it down and wiped his damp forehead.

"Roland, I *am* in a bad mix-up,"

he admitted. "I never meant to get into it. After the last time, I made up my mind to act like a deacon. But Henri Valfroy was such a brute to his wife. She was miserable, Roland, and I seemed to be able to comfort her. At first I only meant to be friendly, but she was so deuced pretty—and then she said she had always loved me—"

"H'm! She threw herself at your head?"

"How infernally coarse you are, Roland! I didn't say anything like that. I said—I said—"

He broke off, stammering, his own eyes falling before the clear gaze of his cousin.

"Well, go on; tell me the rest."

After a pause of sulky silence on the younger man's part, he continued:

"She got it into her head that if she left her husband he would get a divorce and I would marry her. I did my best to persuade her not to. I even stopped going to see her. But this afternoon, when I was in my rooms and had given orders that I was not at home to anyone, there was a row outside, and who should force her way in but that woman!"

De Brissac got up from his chair and paced up and down the dining room.

"It was terrible. You see, I wasn't alone, and I didn't have time to hide Mademoiselle Stanise—of the Folies-Bergères, you know," he put in with a certain pride—"who happened to be there. When Madame Valfroy saw Stanise she seemed to go crazy, and Stanise herself behaved like a Fury. Now I ask you, Roland, would you have known what to do with these two women?"

"Probably not," Roland assented drily.

"Neither did I," De Brissac agreed eagerly. "Stanise insulted Hélène; and Hélène drew a revolver and shot at Stanise, and at me. I disarmed her—at least my man did—but Stanise was lying screaming on the floor. She was shot somewhere, I think, and

I don't suppose Hélène can go back to Henri Valfroy now; and I must get out of France until the thing blows over. I suppose Mademoiselle Stanise will have to be bought off, too."

Roland tried not to show in his face the disgust he felt—less at the incident itself than at the unmanly way De Brissac had met it.

"Why didn't you go out of the country then?" he asked.

"I didn't have the ready money. Besides, I thought I'd come down here and tell you that if you and father would just help me out of this one scrape more, I would promise to settle down and get married at once—on my word I would."

"You would like us to pick out some nice girl for you to honor with your hand, I suppose?"

"Yes. Anyone you like—if you'll only make it right with father this time."

Roland smoked on in silence for some time. He had the strongest inclination to kick his cousin out of the house, an inclination which he had to curb for the sake of De Brissac's father. Roland knew, however, that leniency was wasted on his cousin. Too often already had his father forgiven him.

"And, by the way," De Brissac broke in, "if you can let me have a little cash for my present needs—"

"See here, Robert, I have no money to spare, and if I had, I shouldn't lend it to you. What's more, you are not going to stay here. I will get Casimir to take you to his place till we can hear from your father."

De Brissac made a wry face. "That mountain climbing prig! I'd rather go back to Paris and take my chances there."

"You have no choice in the matter," Roland said coldly. "You will go with Casimir, and I will communicate with your father at once."

That night De Brissac went away. He left behind a note. It read: "I am going out of France."



## XII

DURING the week that the Duke was away Stephana saw a good deal of Casimir d'Erouville, and in her walks and talks with her husband's friend she came to know her husband as she never had before. No matter where the conversation started, it was sure to drift around to Roland before very long. The adoration which, as a small boy, Casimir had conceived for Roland, four years his senior, had not lessened with time.

"Has Roland no faults then?" Stephana asked.

"My faith, yes. He is proud, so proud that it is a vice. He will never justify himself. Three years ago, in helping his amiable cousin, De Brissac, out of his first serious scrape, he—Well, I can't tell you all the circumstances; but it looked to outsiders as if Roland had done something pretty shabby. De Brissac let it appear so. I taxed Roland with it, expecting to receive some explanation. Without a word he turned from me, growing white, as he does when angered, and walked from the room. For a fortnight he did not speak—and how my heart suffered from the estrangement!" Casimir exclaimed with Gallic enjoyment of his own sensations. "In the end I could stand it no longer. I went to him. 'Roland, companion of my youth,' I cried, 'I cannot thus be separated from you. If you are guilty, I will share the burden of your guilt. Throw yourself upon my bosom! We will be friends together in iniquity, as we have been in innocence.'

"I could hardly breathe from the strength of my emotions; but was Roland moved? No! 'Don't be an ass, Casimir,' he said. 'You ought to have known that I couldn't do a thing like that.' He was brutal, as one of those Englishmen he went to college with at Oxford. But it did me good. It was like a cold shower bath. I gasped. I came out of my nightmare. I grasped his hand. I shed tears of joy. Once more he applied to me the epithet 'ass' and then we were

friends as we had always been before."

"You are fonder of him than you are of your brother, Ferdinand, aren't you?" Stephana asked.

Casimir shrugged his shoulders. "Ferdinand has many qualities to make him popular, but I, who have been brought up with him, know that he has no soul. He seeks only his own pleasure, at no matter what cost to others. Now, Roland has a soul one must love."

Had the Duke wished a special pleader with his wife, he could not have found a better one than his admiring cousin.

Word came presently from the Duke that his uncle had been so much affected by his son's misconduct that he had had an attack of heart failure, and was in a serious condition. The De Brissac affair was even more disgraceful than it had at first appeared. Madame Valfroy had not only seriously wounded the actress, but De Brissac, so far from endeavoring to save the situation, had cut and run at the first sign of trouble. He was now reported to have taken passage on a sailing vessel bound for Smyrna.

Roland was very busy trying to keep the matter out of the newspapers and taking care of his uncle. He was going to bring the Marquis de Chavonnay to Touraine, as soon as he was able to be moved.

A few days later, however, the stricken Marquis arrived without his nephew, in charge of two trained nurses. The Duke had been obliged to stay behind to attend to certain matters not yet completed.

To Stephana the Marquis took an immediate fancy, and the two became almost inseparable companions. Since her marriage Stephana had not touched the piano. It had been taken for granted by her husband and his family that her accomplishments were those of an outdoor person. Shyness at first had prevented her telling them that she played; and the longer she waited, the harder she found it to volunteer the information. The old Marquis had not known her two days before he said to her:

"Play for me, *petite*."

She went to the piano and in the twilight played for him the sad notes which echoed the disappointment of his life, and of hers. One by one the rest of the family came in quietly and sat listening to her. It was as if the floodgates of her emotions were opened. She could speak through music as she could not in words, and after her long absence from the piano she gave herself up to the luxury of expression through it. She had not even heard the others coming into the room.

At last she stopped and sat without turning around. There was a sigh which seemed to come from everyone in the room; then the cold little hand of Valentine stole into hers.

"It is too sad—too sad!" the Marquis said softly from his chair. "You shall not play to me again, my child."

### XIII

ROLAND returned to Touraine one evening, looking haggard and weary. He was closeted with his uncle during the better part of the evening. A sense of unhappiness emanated from the murmuring voices upstairs in the room of the Marquis.

Stephana was not sleepy. She dismissed the maid, put out her light and sat by the window, watching the driving clouds and the moon striving for mastery. Through the evergreen trees around the chateau the wind soughed in fitful gusts.

It may have been a half-hour later when, during a lull in the gusty blowing of the wind, she heard the galloping of horses' hoofs on the road. There was something portentous in the sound on a night like this, and she opened the window to make sure she had not been mistaken. A swirl of wind rushed in through the casement and drove her back. A minute later there were hurrying feet in the hall outside.

An indefinable sense of disaster impelled Stephana to go out into the hall. The Duke, with a telegram in his hand,

was standing at the open door of his mother's room.

"What is it, my son?" the Dowager was saying.

"A cablegram from Malta. Robert's vessel was wrecked there. His body was washed ashore."

Roland looked down at the slip of paper in his hand. "I must go away at once, tonight, to bring the body back to France. I do not know whether I ought to tell my uncle. The physicians said any further shock might be fatal. Yet he must be told tomorrow," he went on wearily, "and it seems cowardly to leave you to—"

"I will tell him tomorrow," Stephana said. Her husband had turned instinctively to her.

Robert de Brissac was laid beside the bones of his ancestors almost in secrecy, on account of the recent scandals connected with his name. His father, in spite of protests, was present at the interment.

The old Marquis shed no tears at the solemn rites for the dead. Afterward he was carried back to his bed, where he lay peacefully for two days. Then, in the night, he died, so quietly that the nurse could not say when it happened, and his wealth and his titles passed to Roland du Plessis, Duke de Longtour.

### XIV

FROM the time when Robert de Brissac, gay and irresponsible, had come to the chateau, till now when he and his father were laid to rest in the earth, everything had happened so quickly that Stephana had to persuade herself at times that it was all real.

The Dowager came home with a saddened face; yet, in spite of her efforts to banish the thought, she could not entirely still her feeling of satisfaction at knowing that Roland was again in the position which his forefathers had once held.

After Stephana had gone to bed that night there was a light tap on her door, and Roland's mother came in.

She sat down on the edge of the bed and took one of Stephana's hands between hers.

"I have a message for you from my brother." She patted the girl's hand gently. "His last words to me were for you. 'Tell her that all that was to have been Robert's will some day come to her boys,' he said. 'For the sake of an old man who has learned to love her she must teach her sons the history of the De Chavonnay family. Her little ones will have to be proud of it now. And I trust and pray that she may succeed where I have failed.'"

The Dowager sighed. "His life was a failure, though the world reckoned him among its successes."

Stephana pressed the hands that held hers. There was a lump in her throat. She had become very fond of the broken old Marquis during the time he had been at the chateau. Yet she had a feeling of resentment toward him that the older woman could not suspect.

"He left everything to Roland, did he not?" Stephana asked.

"Yes, Roland is his sole heir," the Dowager replied, almost in a tone of awe. "I cannot help thinking how much better use he will make of the money than Robert would have done."

Stephana was glad it was dark, that the mother might not read in her face how little she rejoiced in the son's good fortune. To her this was a new barrier between them. When he had given her back her money it was as if the ugly account had been wiped out, and a secret hope had come into her heart of winning him now in the way a woman likes to win a man. The man she had insulted in his poverty had gradually come to be her hero, even while she was trying to persuade herself that she despised him. But now how much more difficult was the situation!

Stephana had become morbid on the subject, and she lay awake for hours, turning the question over and over in her mind. The old Marquis's message recurred to her; her little ones would have to learn the history of his line;

and she sobbed at the thought that she might never have any children to become what Robert had failed to be. In the darkness of the night her life appeared to her hopelessly entangled.

In the small hours of the night Stephana could stand the torments of her reflection no longer. She crept from her bed, lighted a candle and by its flickering light wrote to the man who never wrote to her.

Poor Stephana! In the hushed atmosphere of the sleeping chateau she poured out her heart to him. She told him all: of the love that had overtaken her when first he looked at her on the street in New York; of the belief and trust with which she had become his wife; of the cruel words she had heard from the tower—and now of her love for him and her faith in him, which surmounted even the remembrance of those words.

Stephana's reserve was gone, and she was permitted to tell all. She was writing now to the husband of her soul, and nothing should remain unsaid between them. She was stiffened with cold when the letter was ended, but comforted, almost happy.

In the morning her first thought was of the letter to her husband—the only one she had ever written him. She was still under the influence of the feeling that had swayed her in the night. Her first impulse was to pull the old-fashioned bellrope and summon someone to post the letter. Then the second thought, which has wrecked so many good impulses, bade her read it over before sending it.

But the light of the morning is blighting to the dreams of the night. Stephana reread her letter from end to end, and hot waves of shame coursed over her as she read. What had seemed so natural and right by the dim light of the candle stared at her as unwomanly by the broad light of the day. The night stimulates one side of the imagination; the day, another. She, who had seen her husband in one way in the darkness, now could only picture to herself the cool smile of disdain with which he would read her

letter, the formal courtesy with which he would answer it.

Slowly, as if walking in her sleep, she put the letter back into its envelope and again lighted the candle. How feebly it glinted against the power of the sun! Yet it was strong enough to undo in a minute all that it had enabled her to accomplish the night before in an hour.

Stephana caught sight of a sentence, as it blackened into oblivion, which brought the blood afresh to her cheeks, and a faint, bitter smile drew down the corners of her mouth as the words turned to ashes.

## XV

THE first direct consequence of Roland's accession to his uncle's wealth was the furtherance of Solange's marriage with Raoul de Nerac. The post in China was still open to him, and he wrote his acceptance of it, while Roland wrote to his mother that the wedding would have to take place in two weeks, in order that Raoul and his bride might start for Pekin immediately afterward.

The preparations for the marriage were to be of the simplest. Solange tried to look subdued and sad, on account of the recent deaths, but she was unable to keep the radiance from her face. Only a few of the closest relatives were to be present.

"And Monsieur de Maurierval, who married Cousin Estelle, is coming down in his big touring car, and will bring her and Ferdinand de Tournelles." Solange looked about her with the air of a conspirator as she added in guarded tones: "Estelle used to be in love with Roland before she married Monsieur de Maurierval."

"Did Roland love her?" Stephana asked with exaggerated carelessness.

"Oh, no! He might have married her if he had, for she had some *dot*." Solange mentioned it as simply as she would that she had a good figure, or could sing.

Stephana was made vaguely unhappy by Solange's gossip. There was so much of her husband's life of which

she knew nothing. Solange prattled on, quite unconscious.

"Estelle is never happy unless she has half a dozen men in love with her. Fancy Roland standing that! She must be very happy now, though, for she is the rage in Paris. Almost everything *chic* is originated by her; and lots of things are called '*à la De Maurierval*.' The last time I visited there I heard nothing except what she did and what she didn't do. Her husband is immensely wealthy, and there isn't even an American who has clothes like hers."

"Is Ferdinand de Tournelles one of those who are in love with her?"

"I never heard that he was, though he is with her a great deal. I imagine that he would rather have women fall in love with *him*—and lots of them do. He's considered a great lady killer. He used to be in the army, too, only he wasn't poor; and his uniform was terribly becoming to him. But he got into some trouble and had to send in his resignation—it was about being cruel to one of the soldiers. I think Roland had something to do with it. Ugh! I don't like him! He makes me shiver. He looks at you and smiles as if—as if he were a snake and you were a bird and it amused him." Lowering her voice she confided: "I don't believe that Roland likes him. He's not a bit like his half-brother, Casimir. They say if it hadn't been for him poor Robert would not have been so wild."

Stephana was looking forward with interest to the coming of the touring car with Estelle and De Tournelles, of both of whom she had heard so much. It did not arrive until after Stephana had gone up to dress for dinner. News of it came up to her, and added piquancy to her dressing. When a woman is preparing to meet a noted beauty, who has once been in love with her husband, and a cousin, reputed a breaker of ladies' hearts, she would be phlegmatic indeed did her heart not beat a trifle tumultuously, and her desire to look well not betray itself to her maid.

Since coming to Touraine Stephana had not worn any of her more elaborate gowns. They would have seemed out of place in the simple household she had entered. Tonight, however, she called on her wardrobe for its best. She was glad that white had always been her favorite color; she could wear this, under the circumstances, where she might not another. She chose one of those elaborately unadorned gowns, which to the masculine eye appear simple and inexpensive, though they would never so deceive the more cultivated feminine perception. It was not very low at the neck, but left enough bare to suggest the beauty hidden beneath the laces and pearls. The sleeves came to the elbow, and the diaphanous material revealed the upper part of the exquisite arms.

When her toilet was completed Stephana gave a satisfied little nod as she looked at herself in the mirror. She was still before the mirror when the Duke came to take her down to the drawing-room.

A lovely woman, wearing the right frock at the right time, is in her own territory. Stephana swept Roland a low courtesy as she saw the quick flame of admiration flare up in his eyes.

"Do you think, Monsieur le Duc, that your relatives from Paris will be pleased with me?" she asked with mock humility.

"Yes," he answered simply.

He seemed to Stephana taller than ever before, more aloof—more of a duke, in some way; and in spite of his tired and preoccupied look, there was an added indefinable air of independence about him.

With eyes averted Stephana asked: "You think it possible that they may believe you married me for myself?"

There was no reply, and presently Stephana glanced up at him. He was looking off into space, one hand behind his back, the other caressing his clean shaven chin.

She waited for an answer. "Well, I am ready to go downstairs," she said at last.

Silently he offered her his arm and conducted her to the drawing-room. They had hardly reached it before Estelle de Maurierval came in and rushed up to Stephana.

"My dear cousin, I have been so impatient to meet you!" she exclaimed.

Stephana was dazzled by Madame de Maurierval's beauty. She was dark as the night, and in her gown of soft terra cotta looked bewitching. Stephana felt her own assurance suddenly fade before the brilliancy of Estelle. Was it possible that her husband should not have married this glorious creature, having had the opportunity?

The Count de Maurierval was the next to greet Stephana. He was a man of about forty-five, who, in spite of every adventitious aid to the preservation of his appearance, betrayed the results of dissipation. His was one of the noble names of France of great wealth. Ferdinand de Tournelles followed him closely. Stephana was pleasantly disappointed in him. She had expected a kind of villain of the melodrama; instead, a handsome, bearded man was bending over her hand, whom she could not help finding attractive.

The dinner was long and somewhat halting. Ferdinand was on Stephana's left, and she did not find that he looked at her at all as a snake looks at a bird. Instead, he seemed most pleased with such notice as she vouchsafed him. He was of an entirely different type from Roland, with whom she had so often heard him compared in one way or another. He was a true Parisian, with his carefully pointed beard, and, after the quiet weeks in the country, she found his talk of the doings of the metropolis unexpectedly interesting.

"A friend of yours was speaking to me about you only two days ago," Ferdinand said—"the Princess Montignolli."

"Oh, yes, Bertha Whiting. She was married soon after I was."

"She has not been conserving the roses in her cheeks as you have," he went on, with a look of frank admiration that dyed the roses a deeper red.



"They have already skyrocketed through Rome, the Riviera and Biarritz; indeed, had not the Princess felt the need of spiritual communion with the high priests of the Rue de la Paix, I don't doubt that they would be ricochetting about yet."

"And how is Bertha?" Stephana asked.

De Tournelles shrugged his shoulders. "Why should she not be happy? She is a princess—and rich—and married to a man of excellent taste."

"Of excellent taste?" Stephana queried.

"He has never got himself into the newspapers—yet."

The cynicism of the remark struck Stephana unpleasantly, and Ferdinand was quick to notice it.

"Forgive me," he said earnestly. "You must remember that not all our international marriages are like yours. One adopts the common tone in regard to some of them, in spite of oneself."

When dinner was at an end they all went back to the vast drawing-room for coffee and liqueurs. A little apart from the rest Estelle and Ferdinand found themselves together.

"You seem uncommonly devoted to our newest cousin," Madame de Maurierval remarked, lifting her pretty chin, and looking at him with mischief in her black eyes.

"*C'est une beauté des rêves et des songes*," he replied. "I have never seen anything more exquisite in my life. She makes me long for the spring and the country. She suggests mysterious grottoes full of stalactites."

Estelle laughed. "The usual beginning, only a little more poetic than ordinarily. A pity she is the wife of our handsome cousin, Roland, isn't it?"

"Why?"

"Because you never did have any luck where he was," she answered mockingly.

De Tournelles inhaled a long breath from his cigarette. He shrugged his shoulders carelessly.

"Yes, he always did have the luck;

though"—he looked meaningly into his companion's eyes—"he didn't always know enough to profit by it."

Madame de Maurierval was unable to receive his parry with the equanimity with which he had accepted her thrust. She changed color—her former infatuation for Roland had not been unknown to her relatives—and for an instant her eyes blazed; then she laughed lightly.

"My dear Ferdinand, why should we quarrel? I admit I began it, therefore I also make the first overtures for peace."

"They will soon be back in their *hôtel* in the Faubourg," De Tournelles observed presently to Estelle.

"Yes; Roland has bought out the tenant and is having it put in order for the family to come to Paris soon. You know, he does not believe in a conventional period of mourning."

"I wonder if he will learn to spend his money like an aristocrat again? He has lived up here like a peasant so long that he doesn't seem to know how to begin. The money of *la belle Américaine* is not much in evidence yet."

"You are wrong. Two new maids and a man arrived yesterday, and a governess is coming for the twins after the wedding. Solange told me so," Estelle said maliciously.

"Well, he is going the pace, isn't he?" Ferdinand sneered.

The eyes of Madame de Maurierval were upon Stephana, and she asked after a pause: "Does it strike you that *la belle Américaine* looks as the wife of Roland ought to look?"

"And how ought that to be?"

"Radiantly happy, my dear Ferdinand, radiantly happy. Watch her some time when her face is in repose, and tell me if her face is not sad."

"She bought him; and, naturally, he lost his value. One often is disappointed in what one buys. But someone else will be able to console her."

He lifted his liqueur glass.

"Here's to the prettiest game in the world—the game of love—of infinite variety—from the white rose to the night-blooming cereus!"

"Very pretty, Ferdinand. I do not wonder that so conscientious an artist as you has his successes."

She drank his toast and then walked over to Stephana, who at the instant happened to be alone.

"You are a wonderful young person," she exclaimed, sinking down in the seat beside her. "I had heard much of my new cousin from America, but I had not expected a woman who could bowl over a man like Ferdinand at the first meeting. He has positively not been able to speak of anything except you this evening. It's not what I am used to," she ended with a little grimace.

"He seems to be very nice," Stephana said, hesitating. "I had heard a great deal about him, but—"

"What you had heard had not entirely prejudiced you in his favor?" Estelle laughed. "You mustn't attach too much weight to what you hear. Ferdinand defies conventions; therefore, some people take him to be a monster of iniquity. For my part I like him."

This simple commendation from Madame de Maurierval did much to remove from Stephana's mind the prejudice it had harbored against De Tournelles. It was natural, she thought, that to those living quietly in the country a brilliant worldling like Ferdinand should seem as wicked as the World always appears to the Provinces.

When, later in the evening, De Tournelles again made his way to Stephana's side, she could find nothing in his manner to which exception might be taken, even though he did not pretend to hide the interest and admiration she inspired in him. Delicately he indicated to her that she was to him something unattainable, something to be worshiped distantly, as a star.

Ferdinand was blessed with a remarkable voice. It was a voice to soothe the affrighted conscience, a voice to give worth to words if they themselves lacked it. Stephana's heart was hungry for love, and the sympathetic friendship his voice offered her

was in some sort balm for the love denied her. Such art as that of Ferdinand had the air of sincerity, a ring like that of truth. His was not the art which betrays itself.

On his part he felt that he was interesting her, that she liked him already. It was enough for the first evening.

His eyes met those of Roland at the other end of the room. The two men looked at each other with faces that betrayed not the slightest emotion. De Tournelles's eyes did not fall before those of the Duke de Longtour. He was no coward.

## XVI

THE simple ceremonies performed by the village Maire and by the Curé, which started Solange and Raoul on their great venture into life, were over. In tearful happiness, the girl who had become to Stephana a sister, went off on her journey to the other side of the world, and the relatives who had come to the wedding began dropping off one or two at a time. It was a leisurely country. A spring shower decided the party that had come in the touring car to stay a day longer than any of the others except Casimir. Stephana was glad to have them remain, from a variety of reasons. She dreaded the reaction which would come when the household was again alone. It seemed to Stephana that now matters between herself and her husband could not help coming to a head; and she had a nervous dread of facing the crisis. She wished first to feel a little surer of herself—to have an inkling of what the Duke's attitude toward her would be under the vastly different conditions in which he now found himself.

Beside all this, she took a genuine pleasure in the gay talk of the De Mauriervals and Ferdinand. The spring shower, she felt, had been for them only a welcome pretext. She could see that they all liked her and enjoyed staying at the Chateau de Longtour. And in addition to the pleasure she felt in their company, it consoled her pride both to show her husband that

what he valued so slightly others appreciated more highly, and to prove to those critical relatives of his that the Duke de Longtour had married more than mere money.

On the morning of the last day of their stay Stephana came down early, and was greeted at the foot of the stairs by Ferdinand, who usually at this hour had not begun his morning nap.

"You are going out into the garden?" he asked eagerly, surveying her with entire approbation, in her white serge walking suit, whose short skirt showed her trim ankles and shapely feet. "Yes, I knew it. I have been watching that staircase for you as intently as—what shall I say?"

"As a cat watches a hole for a mouse?" Stephana suggested demurely.

"On such a spring morning as this—such a comparison!" he said reproachfully.

"No, not on such a morning," Stephana assented. "I should have said: 'As the robin watches for the early worm.'"

"You are too bad," Ferdinand laughed. "I do not think I can put my trust in you for similes. Now I should have said, 'As a pilgrim in a holy land watches for a miracle.' I wished to be the first to greet you this morning—I had a superstition about it."

They stepped out into the freshness of the garden and walked down one of the paths. For the early spring flowers just beginning to open their blossoms, De Tournelles had no eyes. He looked with increasing pleasure at his companion, noting the graceful molding of her form, the supple strength of her figure.

"This is the pleasantest time I have ever had in this old chateau," he said. "I have never before walked here with a young woman who might have stepped out of an old painting—if the old masters had painted young women dressed in perfect present day taste."

"You expected to find me half Indian, with feathers in my hair, didn't you?" Stephana asked, with the coquetry that Ferdinand awakened in all women to whom he paid attention.

"From the youngest nation one expects children, not adults who might be the result of the most cultivated and oldest civilization, does one not?" he asked gravely.

There was such sincere admiration evident in his speech that Stephana blushed.

"And yet," he went on, "there is about you a freshness that one misses in our women. It is as if the gods had breathed upon you more recently than upon the rest of us."

Out from the doorway, radiant as a June rose, tripped Estelle de Maurienval. Stephana turned to her, laughing.

"Cousin Ferdinand is trying to turn my American head by intimating that the pagan gods have emigrated to America and have imparted to us their immortal youth," she said gaily.

"I don't know what is the matter with Ferdinand lately," Estelle said anxiously. "Usually he is so indifferent. I believe he considers it his greatest charm. He's terribly spoiled, you know."

"I spoiled—with you to take me down continually? Impossible!" he protested.

Casimir came out into the garden, and Estelle immediately appropriated him, and presently drew him away out of earshot of the other two.

Ferdinand shot her a grateful glance as she looked back at him. He found himself eager to talk to Stephana alone, with an eagerness that surprised himself. In all Ferdinand's dealings with women it had been a duel of wits and sense. He knew how to outwit the one, to master the other. But in meeting Stephana it was as if he emerged from crowded artificial gardens, with their overpowering perfume, into a wide, wind-swept country, with the sweetness of cleanliness in the air.

He had known a number of other American women, but none like her. They had been gorgeous creatures—with and without husbands in the background—who had seemed to say to him: "Tempt us if you can; you will find that your wiles are of no

avail." Still less was she of the satiny, cattish type of Parisian women, who from beneath half-closed eyelids seemed to say: "You may, if you dare—but do you dare?"

Moreover, the higher the type of woman, the greater the interest in playing the game to which he and Estelle had drunk on the night of their arrival. Not, to do Ferdinand justice, that he had any present intention of conquest; but in the back of his mind there was always the possibility of adventure with any woman who attracted him. And, finally, it did not detract from the piquancy of the situation that Stephana was the wife of the cousin between whom and himself there had always existed the dislike which the devious and the straightforward entertain for each other.

For these various reasons it was with lively regret that he started away from the chateau with his party immediately after luncheon for the trip back to Paris.

Roland, on the contrary, although he had never varied from his role of the scrupulously polite host, saw the touring car depart with a feeling of relief. Casimir d'Erouville alone now remained from the outside world. He was to go by the night train.

Instead of finding the situation at all strained when thus left alone again with her husband—for Casimir hardly counted as a stranger—Stephana found the Duke gayer, more carefree and joyous than she had ever known him. Several times during the afternoon she gazed at him and wondered if this could be the same man she had known so grave, so reserved and serious. He romped about the garden with the twins, joked with Casimir and his mother, and even teased her slyly, once or twice, with a cadence in his voice akin to that of a lover's.

Presently a servant came forward with a telegram.

The Duke read it and muttered an exclamation of displeasure.

"No bad news, I hope," Stephana said.

"The worst, for me. I shall have

to go to Paris at once—perhaps further, in order that poor Robert de Bris-sac may rest peacefully in his grave. Well, Casimir, I shall at least have the pleasure of your company to Paris to-night."

## XVII

THE old chateau was metamorphosed on the following day. Solange had flown from her nest forever. The twins were immersed in study under the disciplinarian eyes of their new governess—an excellent if uncompanionable person. The gay guests had migrated like joyous birds of the summertime, leaving a bleak winter of solitude behind. A period of bad weather put a stop to neighborhood visiting and prevented even exercise.

The next two weeks were the quietest of Stephana's life. She missed Solange even more than she had expected; she missed her occupation of teaching the twins, her rides with Roland and—to her surprise—the glimpse of gay Parisian society she had seen. Her former love of solitude had been that of the person in the midst of everything the world counts interesting. Yet, although Stephana found time hanging heavy on her hands, it was not so much the loneliness she minded as Roland's neglect and her bitter thoughts. He did not even write to her. A few notes to his mother mentioned that he was very busy, without giving details.

She forgot that he was still only living up to the conditions she herself had laid down. The situation had become curiously reversed by his accession to his uncle's wealth. Where before she had been holding him at arm's length, now he had the appearance of deliberately neglecting her.

Stephana's thoughts drove her restlessly about the old chateau, and finally even out into the rain. She would roam about for hours with her dogs, or ride hard and fast through the slippery mud. She grew thinner, and her eyes larger, until, except for the proud way in which she held her head, she might have been the original of the Madre

Dolorosa. To her husband she was now nothing except a title hunter, she thought. She had told him this herself. While she had been able to think of him as a fortune hunter and to despise him, it had not mattered. But now he had redeemed himself by giving back the money, while she still held the title. Probably he had the same scorn for her which she had felt for him. She burned with shame at the thought, and then illogically grew angry at him for not being able to see that she really loved him and not his title, though, when she remembered the insults she had heaped on him, she realized that this was more than she had any right to expect.

To the hurt of his actual neglect was added the knowledge that another woman was witness to her humiliation. Had she been alone she could have gritted her teeth and borne her misery, while making up her mind what course to pursue. It was his mother's silent sympathy which made each recurring morning more trying. We have lost the animal instinct to go off by ourselves when physically ill or hurt, but we still retain it for our moral suffering.

For herself, the older woman had spent too many years of her life in storm to complain of mere peace and monotony. But she chafed under the abandonment of the girl whom she had come to love as a daughter, and her vexation against Roland rose steadily. If business called him from Touraine so often, he might at least take his young wife with him. That her faith in him had been absolute till now made her insistent doubts the more torturing. Was it possible that he who had seemed so noble and high-minded in adversity should have another side to display in prosperity? Such things had been, and such alone seemed to her an adequate explanation of his present conduct.

Stephana noticed that the Dowager's attitude toward her son had subtly changed. When she had first come to Touraine he had been to his mother a man who could not possibly do any-

thing wrong. Of late she spoke of him less and less, and with an underlying tone of doubt and disapproval.

On the fourteenth day of Roland's absence she came to Stephana's room.

"Dear, will you come tonight to midnight mass in the chapel?"

"Midnight mass?" Stephana repeated listlessly. "What is that for?"

"To pray for the repose of the soul of the man who took his life nine years ago tonight." After a silence, she added hesitatingly: "I think Roland will be here."

"Has he written?" Stephana asked, a trace of animation creeping into her voice.

"No, but I think he will come. He has never yet been absent. He cannot have forgotten the day."

The girl noticed again the doubt in the older woman's voice. She rose, moved by a sudden overwhelming wave of misery, and knelt by the Dowager's chair.

"Tell me, were you happy with your husband?" she asked, her sad, dark eyes fixed on the other's face.

The Dowager stroked the girl's hair with infinite tenderness. "No, my child, not as happiness is understood by women. I was loved fiercely for a year, to be neglected for others, then loved again, and again abandoned. A love which is based only on the beauty of a woman cannot last. It is the respect, the trust, the companionship a man gives his wife that makes her happy. I never had any of these, because it is not in the De Longtour blood to give. How can they give what is not in them?"

She spoke with the bitterness less for herself than for the girl kneeling at her side. And Stephana, listening, with her head on the shoulder of her husband's mother, had the feeling that the older woman was preparing her for a life which held little of conjugal happiness.

The rest of the day they spent together, these two unhappy women. In the afternoon the De Longtour mausoleum was opened, and they put flowers upon the coffin of the man who had



spent so ill a life. Then they wandered about the gray old mansion together, not knowing just how to pass the time till evening. They spent an hour in the picture gallery, where the portraits and the names remained of those that once had been men and women of their race.

"We are going about this afternoon as though we were ghosts of those up there," Stephana said with wan jocularity. "Aren't there any ghosts here? It is all the place needs."

"Yes, there are many," the Dowager answered. "They are the souls of the Duchesses de Longtour, whose hearts have been trampled upon by the men who had promised to cherish them. Among all these beautiful women there are only two that were not made miserable."

As nightfall approached the Dowager sent Stephana to her room to lie down and rest—as if rest were what she needed. She herself grew ever more dejected as the hours passed; she foresaw for the wife of her son all the misery she herself had endured. And that her Roland should ever be capable of the evil ways of his father made her meditations bitter indeed.

Immersed in such thoughts Roland found his mother, when he descended from the hired trap which had brought him from the station and entered her room.

"You here, at last!" she cried, and at the actual sight of him, her heart leaped within her.

"You did not think, mother, that I could forget the day? I could not reach here earlier."

He clasped her in his arms, and in that haven all the sorrows of the afternoon disappeared.

"You have been lonely without me?" he asked gaily.

She drew herself partly away from him. "I have had Stephana," she answered, and then demanded with what sternness she could muster: "Roland, what is the meaning of your treatment of her?"

Roland put his hand caressingly on her arm. "There, there, mother, dear,

you must not worry about it." Yet he attempted no word of explanation or defense. Was it that stubborn pride of his which would never reply to unjust accusations, or guilt, which had no defense to offer?

"Can it be, Roland," she asked earnestly, "that you were not free to give her your love when you married her?"

Roland gave a short laugh, but only shook his head.

"You may think you can laugh everything away, but I tell you, Roland, that a man must take care of what he prizes. If you did not see it, I saw that Ferdinand was very much taken with Stephana—"

"Mother!" he interrupted, with no trace of laughter left. "I can defend my wife, and I would rather that even you did not mention Ferdinand's name in connection with hers."

"Then see that you make her happy," his mother retorted. "A woman happy in her husband's love is not in danger. It is the woman with the empty and disappointed heart who becomes prey for such as Ferdinand."

## XVIII

"WILL you ride with me this morning?"

Roland stood before his wife in his riding clothes, smiling. Stephana's first impulse was to refuse—not so much the invitation as the smile with which it was given. She wished to snub him, to tell him that she preferred to stay by herself, as she had done for the last two weeks; but she repressed this inclination and answered indifferently:

"I shall be ready in a few minutes."

The bad humor of the weather had fled, and the sun shone as if it had never known the sulks. During the ride Roland was as blithely friendly as if there were no shadow of disagreement between them. They rode to the edge of the estate, and took luncheon at a small inn, which nearly turned itself inside out at the unusual honor done it.

Stephana had been coolly and impersonally polite during the morning. On the ride back she found it hard to resist thawing into actual friendliness under the sunny good humor of her husband; but she steeled herself against him with the remembrance of the lonely days just passed. If he thought he could neglect her as much as pleased him, and then come home to find her glad to welcome him back, he must learn that he was mistaken.

"Were you not lonesome down here in the country during the last fortnight?" he asked casually.

The apparently malicious audacity of the question nearly took her breath away.

"Not lonesome for me," he went on cheerfully, "but the beastly weather and the lack of company and Solange's going away and all that."

"I could have screamed from loneliness," Stephana replied. "I used to think I wanted it in New York, but I didn't know what it was. Another month of it would make me the greatest worldling in France."

"H'm!" He stroked his chin. "I have had the *hôtel* in the Faubourg made ready for us. How long would it take you to pack up for Paris?"

"For Paris," Stephana repeated, "I could be ready in an hour."

Roland laughed at her vehemence. "Then we shall leave here tomorrow—since we can't all be so expeditious as you. There are several things I have to see to before going away again."

Stephana was as interested as a schoolgirl making her first venture out into the world. And so engrossed was she during the rest of the day in her own preparations that she did not learn until the next morning that she alone was to accompany her husband.

"Why, mamma, are you not coming, too?" she cried in manifest consternation.

"I will follow after a while, *mignonne*. There is much to do in the chateau before I can leave it."

"It is perfectly respectable—my mother's being here alone," Roland

suggested, a demure twinkle in his eyes.

Stephana said nothing further on the subject, although she felt that he had in a measure tricked her into the trip to Paris.

## XIX

Of all the beauties of Paris, her backyards and courtyards are the most charmingly characteristic. Palaces, monuments and triumphal arches require only capitalists to pay, artists to perform and heroes to commemorate; but a city in which the backyards are so charming and well cared for as those of Paris possesses a general love of beauty among its dwellers most remarkable to American eyes.

In the courtyard of the De Longtour house vines grew luxuriously upon the surrounding walls, while bushes around their feet tempered the architectural rigidity of the rectangle. Two big horse chestnut trees grew and bloomed by the heavy iron gate.

"Oh, what a lovely spot!" Stephana cried, as they drove in under the old stone arch, chipped by bullets of the Commune.

Roland's eyes rested lovingly on the house. "It doesn't look as if it had recently been desecrated by the presence of a millionaire Swiss chocolate manufacturer, does it? If he hadn't found the atmosphere of the Faubourg as chilly as the tops of his Alps, I am afraid I could not have persuaded him to cancel the rest of his lease."

"Well, I am glad the Faubourg was not too kind to him. And what a dear old house it is!"

Roland beamed at her enthusiasm. Nothing could have flattered him more than her appreciation of his home.

Together they rambled through the stately halls and generous rooms. Of a large and somber turn of mind must the old De Longtours have been, judging by their abode, and the new mistress of it felt very young and American as she went from room to room.

"And this suite is yours," Roland said, throwing open a door. "I have

tried to give you the conveniences you have been accustomed to."

It was a sunny suite of rooms, from which the somber hangings and dark woodwork had been banished, while the plumber, pride of America, had been invoked to bring the luxury of the waters almost to the bedside.

"I feel as if I had stepped from the Middle Ages into day after tomorrow," Stephana said with a little laugh. She added carelessly: "Are these the rooms usually occupied by the Duchesse de Longtour?"

"No," Roland answered.

In spite of the thoughtfulness manifest in the preparations for her, a queer little pang of disappointment shot through Stephana's heart. Neither in Touraine nor here had she been given the apartment that had belonged to other duchesses.

Dinner was announced before Stephana had half exhausted her new treasure house. Seated in the overpoweringly big dining room at a small table, beneath the painted eyes of his ancestors, she had an unwonted sense of intimacy with her husband. The feeling was so strong that it almost embarrassed her.

After dinner they went into the library, where a bright wood fire was burning. Coffee and liqueurs were brought to them there, and as Roland lounged and smoked in a big armchair, while Stephana was lost in another, a sense of comradeship, of friendship, grew up between them.

Stephana held out her toes to the blaze, and one of her slippers fell from her foot. Roland was on his knees in an instant to restore the fugitive to its place. He did not rise at once from his devotional position.

"What pretty feet you have, Stephana!" he said.

"Have I?" She glanced down carelessly, as if just aware that she possessed feet. "All American women have, haven't they?"

"Ah, but you are not American—not typically so, I mean."

"Why do you think that?" she asked.

"I don't know exactly," he answered, drawing his chair a little nearer the fire. "I think it is because you impress one as having leisure to develop a soul. Most of your countrywomen are so tremendously busy cultivating their minds or their muscles or their philanthropic emotions that their souls haven't an opportunity to sprout. They are brilliant and athletic and domineeringly philanthropic, but—" He shrugged his shoulders in conclusion.

"So I am not brilliant and athletic and philanthropic?"

"Not in the American fashion."

"You do not like American women?"

"Yes, I *like* them, without finding in them the charm they ought to have. They are too self-reliant. A man desires in his wife a certain dependence which will make him assume the responsibility of protecting her, and which will make him strong."

"Women ought to be weak in order that men may be strong?" she asked, shading her eyes from the fire and glancing curiously at him. The point of view was different from what she ordinarily heard.

"In a way, yes."

"Then because our women are strong, our men are weak?" There was laughter in her eyes.

Roland laughed, too. "It has only made the women restless in their strength. As for the men, they are the finest in the world. They are the only men who could live with the American women."

"Well, it's only fair they should have to live with them, if they have made them what they are. I suppose you consider our men unhappy?"

"They are philosophical. Moreover, they love work as no other race does. But it is not they who are the great losers; it is the women themselves."

For ten minutes there was silence between them, the silence that can come only with friendship. Then Roland leaned forward and asked abruptly:

"Stephana, there is one thing I cannot understand: why did you want to marry a nobleman?"

She did not answer at once. Gazing into the fire she saw herself again awaiting Roland, Duke de Longtour, in the library of the New York house; saw him come in at the door, heard his formal proposal and felt again the disappointment she then had felt.

"My father wanted it," she answered at length.

"But ought you to have sacrificed yourself for his ambition?"

Stephana felt that the conversation was taking a turn that she could endure long with equanimity.

"You see, Monsieur le Duc," she said lightly, "my family only starts with my grandfather; still I feel that I owe it something, as you owe something to yours. Indeed, I'm not sure but that a young family like mine ought to be treated with greater tenderness than one that can stand on its own legs—don't you think so?"

Roland laughed again. "Our families have been very busy in our lives thus far. Don't you think we both owe something to ourselves—perhaps even to each other?"

Though he had spoken in her own light tone, there was a tremor of deeper feeling in his voice. Stephana's heart beat more tumultuously; she might have responded to it, but for certain rankling remembrances. From one of these she spoke next.

"I am glad you did not give me the regular apartment of the Duchesse de Longtour." She strove to make her voice entirely natural, but in spite of her it sounded hard. "It would have been trying for mamma to have had to give up that to which she had been accustomed."

"That was not the reason," Roland answered slowly. "I had often heard my mother say that those rooms were filled with the sighs of the dead. I am not superstitious, but I wished you to begin your married life under happier auspices."

Stephana glanced at her husband, almost startled. She could not quite make him out. Several times what had seemed a slight on his part had

turned out to be prompted by the greatest thoughtfulness.

She rose from her seat. "I am a little tired. I think I should like to go to bed."

Roland escorted her to the foot of the stairs. She gave him her hand, and he raised it to his lips.

"Good night," she said.

He stood watching her mount the stairs. At the top she turned and looked down on him. For the fraction of a second she hesitated, then disappeared.

The Duke stood for a minute longer, as if hoping that she would return. Then slowly he went back to the library. He closed the door, arranged the fire and sat down in his chair. Lighting a cigar, he held it absently in his hand until it went out. The fire burned lower and lower; a log broke in two and the pieces sought opposite corners of the hearth to smolder into blackness. The candles, one after the other, flared up and then went out. The gray dawn gradually crept into the dark room. Only then did Roland rouse himself from his meditations and seek his own room.

## XX

STEPHANA woke the next morning happier than she had been since the first morning of her arrival in Touraine. The succession of miserable days, the best of which had held only negative happiness through forgetfulness or apathy, was at an end. Roland had surely been her lover the night before, restrained as had been his words and actions, and the hateful question of money could no longer intrude between them.

While she was dressing, the maid brought her a big box of white roses.

Stephana sat up in bed and buried her face in the flowers. The sharp edge of a card came into contact with her nose. She rubbed it while she read: "Not American beauties, but aren't they sweeter?" and she blushed as at a compliment.

Presently the card of the Countess de Maurienvall was brought up to her, and, blooming like a rose, Estelle entered her boudoir.

"I just ran in for a moment to welcome you to Paris," Estelle gushed, kissing Stephana on both cheeks. "It is the first morning for weeks when I could take my walk. I believe you brought the sunshine with you—you look as if you had."

"Do I? Well, I did not bring it from Touraine. The weather there has been terrible since you went away."

"And those flowers! What admirer has already found out that you were here? Roland? That is one of the things I admire most about him. He always does know how to do the right thing with women."

This praise of her husband had a curiously chilling effect on Stephana.

Estelle rose from her seat and went to the mirror. "These new hats, they *are* a nuisance! One has to have your hair, my dear, to wear them with comfort."

The odd feeling of resentment she had toward the Countess, Stephana tried to shake off. "But the hat could not be more becoming to anyone, and I'm sure your hair is lovely," she cried.

The Countess de Maurienvall made a slight grimace. "It ought to be—it cost enough. But you know what Frenchmen are: they adore beauty, and we poor wives need all the aids we can get. Even as it is, my poor Pierre has the most mad infatuations. But he always returns to me, swearing that none of the others can hold a candle to me."

"You take it very philosophically."

Estelle shrugged her shoulders. "What is the use of making yourself unhappy or disagreeable about it? That's what I told your friend, Princess Montignolli—Miss Bertha Whiting that was. 'Console yourself,' I said, when she was weeping wet tears on my shoulder over the Prince's fickle disposition. And what do you suppose the minx did? Snatched my Pierre from under my very nose, and they've been like turtle doves ever

since. If that isn't ingratitude, I never saw it."

Stephana laughed. There was little tragedy in life, as Estelle viewed it.

"A woman must not show a man that she cares about his peccadillos," the Countess rattled on; "though I must admit that Montignolli fairly galloped through his honeymoon to get back to his usual pursuits—and he has a marvelous capacity for pursuing, that man! I sometimes think Italians are worse than the French—and you know what Frenchmen are!"

"I don't think I should include all Frenchmen in the same category," Stephana remarked with cool rebuke.

The Countess's face showed a well bred endeavor to hide her amazement. "Oh, you mean Roland's constancy to the one woman," she stammered. Then she smiled in enlightenment. "Of course! I might have guessed that a queer fellow like Roland would have told you. I've often thought it would be better in our marriages if all these things were frankly understood."

Stephana's brain reeled, as if it could not take in the full significance of Estelle's words. The pretty room, filled with sunshine, turned to a glare of hateful white, and for an instant something seemed to be strangling her. Then she struggled to imitate Estelle's careless shrug of the shoulders, and heard herself saying:

"Does a little frankness, more or less, matter in things of this kind? If one accepts the main fact, the degree does not make any especial difference."

The Countess looked at Stephana with a countenance on which admiration was plainly depicted. "It is wonderful to me how adaptable you American women are. I hear that in your country you would not stand such a state of affairs for a minute."

"When we marry into the aristocracy of Europe we can't expect to carry our own provincial standards with us, can we?" Stephana asked in a hard tone.

"But everyone can't be so reasonable," Estelle sighed. "Even I lose patience sometimes; and usually it



takes an American a year to get out of the dumps. You are cleverer than most. It does relieve one of certain responsibilities, however, to have it all perfectly understood."

"Yes, it simplifies things a great deal," came from Stephana's dry lips. Although the Countess's pretty face was bland and confidential, Stephana felt almost subconsciously that her guest would derive satisfaction from any sign of hurt she might give, and it became her supreme effort to conceal the torment she was suffering.

Estelle opened a silver cigarette case which hung from her belt. "Have you learned this one of our vices yet?" She offered her hostess a cigarette. "This is the White Rose, my favorite brand."

Stephana had never smoked in her life, but she accepted one now, partly because any action lessened the agony of listening, partly because Roland would have disliked her doing it.

A gleam of amusement was deep hidden in Estelle's eyes as she noted the unaccustomed way in which Stephana handled the cigarette. She herself lighted one with the grace of the expert, and blew smoke rings into the air while covertly studying the girl who had married the man she once had loved. There was something in the pure face, in the proud carriage of the head and the high bred pretense of not suffering which irritated the Countess de Maurierval. In a lesser actress it would have caused an asperity of manner which she did not display. That there was not sufficient sympathy between the two for them ever to become friends was patent; and when between two such women there is simulation of friendship, the ground is well prepared for hate. Estelle would have liked to see Stephana break down and cry, that she might play the part of confidant and adviser. Above all, she would have liked to see the flush of shame creep into those cheeks now so purely pale.

Of this, however, her face betrayed nothing. When she spoke it was with the friendly raillery of one pretty woman to another.

"I know one man who will be the happiest in Paris to know that you are here—Ferdinand de Tournelles. Will you believe that he has been walking by here every day, in the hope that you had arrived?"

Stephana felt that she must say something or her silence would be noticeable. "How did *you* know that we had come?" she asked.

"I met Roland, of course."

"Really? Where did you meet him?"

The Countess's silvery laugh filled the room as she rose to her feet. "My dear, you are clever; but maybe I have already talked more than I ought. He told me, though, that you had no other engagement for tonight, so you are to come to dinner with us—quite informally—only a cousin or two to welcome you to Paris."

Of all things in the world Stephana would rather not have seen any more of Estelle on this day; but lest this should be apparent she returned her parting kiss with more than perfunctory warmth.

"We shall be charmed to come to dinner," she said, so airily that an outsider would never have suspected what she had undergone this morning.

Estelle held her off at arm's length. "My dear, you can become the queen of Paris. The Faubourg is waiting to receive the Duchesse de Longtour with open arms—but you yourself it will love as it has never loved an American."

The Countess de Maurierval was a finished artist. Her tribute to Stephana had only that touch of envy which was natural in a beautiful woman before a younger and a fairer one. But Stephana hardly paid attention to the words that fell on her ears. She only knew that at last she was to be relieved of the almost intolerable presence of the woman who was torturing her.

Slowly she walked back to her bedroom. Again the earth had opened and swallowed up all her dreams of happiness. But, as she dumbly looked upon the new wreckage of her life, it was not the Countess de Maurierval's

words which recurred to her; it was those of Roland's mother:

"They are all alike, the De Longtours. . . . There are many ghosts; they are the souls of the women whose hearts were trampled upon by the Ducs de Longtour."

At length Stephana tried to shake off the dark thoughts oppressing her. "After all, I was to marry to please my father," she murmured, and rang for the maid to make her ready for luncheon.

## XXI

THE Countess de Maurienvall walked out beneath the flowering horse chestnut trees, and down the Boulevard St. Germain with a step which she could hardly subdue to the soberness the staid Faubourg demanded. On the bridge over the Seine she permitted herself a hop, like a naughty child enjoying a forbidden pleasure. The broad, bright expanse of the Place de la Concorde seemed to get into her veins still more, and an insuppressible smile overspread her dark, piquant features. Yet, for all the brightness around her and her own good looks, it was not an entirely pleasant smile. Seeing it, a man would instinctively put his hand on his pocket, if his treasure lay therein; a woman would put her hand to her back hair, to see if wanton wisps were playing her false. It was a smile such as the Roman women perhaps wore when some uncommonly humorous incident happened in the Coliseum.

Turning into the Champs Élysées, she met her cousin, Ferdinand de Tournelles, beard neatly trimmed, hands tightly gloved and clothed to perfection in the style of the French.

"Aha! I was just thinking of you—and the pretty wife of Roland," she exclaimed, her smile breaking into a laugh at the appositeness of the meeting.

"Thank you for thinking of me with her," he answered gaily. He had always liked the mischievous devil that inhabited the fair form of this cousin

of his. She expected nothing of him that his own inclination did not urge him to be. To her, as to him, the world was a place to amuse oneself in.

"Yes, I have just called on the young American of whom you were so much *épris* in Touraine. And I found her—how do you think? Bright as the morning—with roses from Roland! Defenses of Frenchmen on her lips—for Roland! Sunshine in her eyes—because of Roland!"

Ferdinand made a grimace. "And is that what you came so smiling to tell me? I might, if I were reminiscent—"

"Take care!" She lifted a daintily gloved forefinger in warning. "Remember we are allies. It is my privilege sometimes to tease while I help; but no twitting on facts by you, or the *entente cordiale*—pouf, it will be gone! Besides which, you are ungrateful. I said a pretty word or two for you, and would have said more, if it had been the psychological moment. Instead, we talked—of what do you think?"

"I can't guess."

"Of Roland's constancy."

"Roland's constancy?" he repeated blankly.

She nodded, her eyes narrowing in her enjoyment of his dismay. "When in our discussion of Frenchmen she coolly informed me that all Frenchmen could not be credited with the same lightly amorous disposition, I exclaimed quite innocently: 'Oh, you mean Roland!'—and then I talked a little. You should have seen her getting whiter and whiter as I prattled on! When I had finished, she stammered: 'Of course, in a *mariage de convenance*, like ours, it is best to have everything plainly understood'—as if the little Puritan would ever have married her Roland with 'understandings'! She bit her lips; she put her hand to her throat and gasped like a chicken with the pip."

"Poor little thing!" Ferdinand cried with genuine pity.

"Yes, 'poor little thing!'" Estelle mimicked, with a vicious gleam in

her black eyes. "You great, generous-hearted creature! I suppose if she ever comes to your arms for consolation you will take her by the hand and lead her back to her husband and the paths of rectitude."

Ferdinand laughed, swinging his slender cane. He did not pretend to dwell long on the heights.

"But why are you taking so much trouble in the matter?" he asked.

"Oh, just because I like you—and I hate him." Her white teeth came together with a vicious little snap.

"Are you quite sure you don't love him instead?" Ferdinand asked, watching her lazily.

"Love him? I *hate* him! I didn't go down to Solange's wedding and smirk and smile and kiss his stiff little American wife for nothing. A woman like me doesn't forget such a slight as I received from him."

The Marquis de Tournelles looked at his cousin with amused admiration. "You are a good hater. But how did you have the nerve to—'talk'? Suppose she goes to Roland?"

The Countess de Maurienvall shrugged her pretty shoulders.

"She won't, or I don't know women. But if she does, what can happen to me? A scene with Roland, and I lose her valuable friendship—that is all. One doesn't go to law about it, like the vulgar Americans. If it were you, now, he might run you neatly through the lungs, the *beau sabreur* that he is; but he can't fight a woman. Besides, I have infinite faith in this." Her pearly teeth opened, and her finger touched the tip of her little red tongue.

"I declare I am sorry for Stephana, though," Ferdinand mused aloud. "Think of that lovely, pure face touched with sorrow!"

"Bah! You men!" Estelle cried angrily. "I believe you are really afraid of Roland."

Ferdinand carefully lighted a cigarette. "My dear Estelle, did you ever know me to desist from laying my humble affections at the feet of a woman because of the size or ferocity

of the husband in the background?" he asked with gentle reproach.

"I was unjust to you, Ferdinand; forgive me. All the same, I advise you to make hay now—while the sun does not shine. For when it does you are likely to shrivel up and blow away in the strength of his rays. If you had gone to see her this morning before I called, I think you would have had your trouble for your pains."

"What if I had?" Ferdinand responded lightly. He twirled his cane, and blew a puff of smoke heavenward. Was this not a most cheerful world to live in, with the trees in new leaf, the sun neither too hot nor too cold, the gay equipages driving up and down the Champs Élysées, the automobiles darting along inside on their dark, oily strips; was it not pleasant for one with looks and position and money? He felt the better side of him aroused. And he had a better side; no man so uniformly successful with women as he but must have. He even prided himself on it at times, though he did not often let it stand in the way of his pleasures.

"What if I had?" he repeated with an airy gesture of his right hand. "If she really cares for Roland—"

"One can 'really care' for Roland," Estelle interrupted, sneering; "and one can really stop caring for Roland, if a better man appears. It remains for you to prove that you are the better man."

There was provocation in the words of the Countess de Maurienvall and in the taunting glance she gave him. Her influence was never one to stimulate the better side of a man's nature. In her there was always recognizance of the pleasant existence of evil, and of the joy of evil doing.

The sinister side awoke within Ferdinand de Tournelles. The broad avenue leading up to the Arc de Triomphe lost its innocent gaiety and took on the intenser hue of desire. For him, too, there should be the delirium of triumph—of triumph in love and in hate. His face flushed and his hands became damp. He no longer

swung his slender cane casually; he held it as if it were a rapier.

"I shall call to pay my respects to the Duchesse de Longtour this afternoon—and many other afternoons," he said.

The Countess gave a little satisfied nod. "You will also come to dinner with us tonight? She will be there."

## XXII

ROLAND came rushing in to Stephana at noon with the enthusiasm of a boy. He had thrown off a dozen years of gravity since coming to Paris.

"What do you think I have been doing this morning while you slept?" he almost shouted. "I have been buying an automobile! And out of compliment to you I got an American machine—a new one just sent over. It is what your countrymen would call a 'dream.' It purrs like a cat. On what they call the high speed it will creep along like the shadow of a cloud on a calm day, or it will tear over the country like a hurricane. I have ridden a running thoroughbred, but never has the wind whistled past my ears as it did today. Of course, I have been in other machines, but as a guest. As the owner—as the soul and brain of the thing—it is quite different. Will you go with me to the Bois this afternoon, in our beautiful new Columbiad touring car? Oh, not alone! I would not risk you with my unaided skill, though I have been practising all the morning. You will go, will you not?" he repeated, noticing for the first time Stephana's unresponsiveness.

"No; I shall be shopping this afternoon," she replied, manufacturing the pretext on the moment.

"Bother the shopping! You surely do not need any more clothes, after the vanload you brought from America. Or, if you must shop, let us meet for tea somewhere, and ride in the Bois afterward. Come! We may have all sorts of adventures! I may try to climb a tree or run over a fat lady. The world is young and not to be de-

pended on. I am leaving the nineteenth century of the horse and entering the mile-a-minute twentieth century today."

Noticing at last that there was more than ordinary coolness on Stephana's part, he stopped his gay flow of talk to ask anxiously: "Is anything the matter? Don't you feel well?"

His manner exasperated Stephana. What right had he to inquire with apparent solicitude about her well being, as if anyone else than he were responsible for all the misery that had befallen her?

"Nothing is the matter," she answered shortly. "But you will have to excuse me from coming with you this afternoon. I dare say you will have no trouble in amusing yourself without me."

The Duke de Longtour looked at his wife in comical amazement. Again she had executed a complete *volte face*. In ordinary matters he would not have called her capricious; but of her varying attitudes toward him he did not know what to think. The night before he had told himself that all was coming out well. Fifteen hours afterward he would not have known her for the same woman whose slipper he had replaced, whose hand he had kissed.

His enthusiasm dashed, Roland returned to his former grave demeanor. His usual politeness remained, and the two talked during luncheon as one does before the servants.

"Estelle was here this morning," Stephana remarked once. "She told me that she had seen you—"

She broke off abruptly and looked straight at him with a certain challenge.

"Yes; she asked me if we had any engagement tonight," he replied quickly—too quickly, it seemed to Stephana. "I told her we hadn't. I thought you might like to go out after your quiet weeks in the country, although I don't care very much for the De Maurienvals and their set, even if she is my cousin."

"No; they know too much," Stephana thought, but said nothing.

"Of course, according to the strict French custom, we should keep in seclusion for a certain length of time," he went on; "but I do not believe in the old-fashioned ostentatious mourning. It is the last thing my uncle would have wished from us."

Stephana spent the afternoon in a fever of shopping—not that she needed anything, but women often find surcease of sorrow in shopping, as men do in work or drink. She returned only in time to dress for dinner.

As they were going down to the carriage Roland stopped her.

"Stephana, I do not understand you," he said. "What have I done to offend you since last night?"

"You!" She gave a mirthless laugh. "Why, nothing, of course. Why should you think that all my moods come from you? I am interested in other persons besides you, and they affect me quite as much."

She brushed past him. Roland shook his head in a kind of pathetic despair and followed her down to the carriage.

The dinner of the Countess de Mau-rierval was hastily gotten up, but there was nothing slipshod about it. She had the faculty of imparting *verve* to whatever she did, and it was quite a brilliant little gathering tonight. Ferdinand and the Princess Montignolli were there, and they were wont to shine in any company. There was also an artist whose wall filling allegorical picture of a pale blue and yellow Hell, with the Emperor William figuring as Satan and a number of well known Anti-Dreyfusards as lesser devils, had caused Monsieur Frémeau himself to become something of a notable. The only other outside guest was a Senator, who had risen to a pinnacle of prominence by his ardent advocacy of a rigorous law to compel Frenchmen to drink their own light wines exclusively, and thus bring peace and health to a land distracted and enervated by wine riots and absinthe.

It was all carefully arranged and chosen. The artist and the Senator might be relied on conversationally to

act the part which the palms play in the conservatory for screening those who wished to be alone. They threw out an impenetrable spray of conversation, behind which Ferdinand could talk to Stephana and Pierre de Mau-rierval to the Princess without let or hindrance. There was, moreover, a centerpiece of flowers on the table, which tactfully kept husbands and wives out of sight of each other, while inciting artist and statesman to bark freely—as a picket fence incites two dogs.

Ferdinand sat at Stephana's right. "I was sorry to find you out this afternoon," he said. Again it was his manner, not the words, which seemed to mean too much. Ferdinand's eyes had long lashes, and they looked a dumb, respectful devotion at her, which somehow soothed her wounded spirits a little.

"I don't suppose you quite understand what it means to me to have you here in Paris," he went on. "You probably have a great capacity for making friends. For my part, I have many acquaintances, but since the first day I saw you I felt that *we* should be friends."

"Do you think anyone has many?" Stephana asked. "If one were never disappointed, it would be easy to go on making one friend after another. But a bitter disappointment in a person one has believed in seems to kill the capacity for friendship."

"Should it be so?" he protested. "We know that such a thing as real friendship exists. Prospectors looking for gold never lose faith in the existence of what they are seeking, and rarely in their own ability ultimately to find it."

He spoke with such sincerity that Stephana felt solace in his words and in the friendship he offered her.

The dinner went on from course to course. The Countess kept an eye on Ferdinand and saw that he was making progress. Stephana did not speak much. She was in no mood for it, and he saw this and sympathetically shielded her from having to talk. Her

eyes fixed on the warring speakers, she thought her own thoughts. Ever since morning she had been trying to adjust herself to the new conditions of which she had learned. There was a strain of the philosopher in her; and now her striving for a working compromise with herself and the world around her seemed to crystallize in this atmosphere which might have appeared so far removed from true philosophy.

What was the use of expecting things to be different from what she found them? She was in this life, and she might as well enjoy what pleasures it offered, without eating her heart out because they were not what she would have wished them to be. She turned and gave a more attentive ear to the Senator. He was an orator of some repute, and really clever and amusing, if one paid attention to what he said.

It was comedy, all comedy—a comedy built on tragedy, which is the truly humorous kind. Well, she would cease sulking. She would not subject Roland de Longtour—who was only like the rest of the De Longtours—to her humors and vapors any more. She would be gay and worldly and witty with the best of them. She could hold her own among these Parisians if she chose. What, after all, was the use of dreaming of other things than fate accorded one? And why imagine that she would be any happier in other circumstances, since she was not happy in those which the world considered the most fortunate and brilliant? Her companions did not make themselves miserable by vain regrets. Here was the Princess Montignolli—whose marital troubles were notorious—her head bent over her plate, saying something in an undertone to De Maurienva, and both were flushed and interested, if not happy. Roland, on the other side of the centerpiece, might easily be bending his head toward the "one woman" of his constancy; nor did it require any stretch of the imagination to picture Estelle similarly employed.

She turned back to Ferdinand, with a gay laugh for a clever *riposte* of the

artist's at a vicious lunge of the Senator's, and from then on took part in the war of words.

Her changed mood grew upon her with the progress of the dinner. Was champagne put here to be sipped abstemiously? It was exhilarating to feel one's sense of responsibility slipping from one. She had managed so ill when she had tried to direct her own destinies; let chance take them in hand and see if it could do any better!

Her eyes grew brighter, and her manner took on a certain recklessness which intoxicated Ferdinand at her side far more than all the wine he had drunk. Once in leaning forward she caught Roland's eyes, and saw in them a wonder that was almost reproof. She broke into a laugh at the sight. Let him wonder. The day was past when women stayed at home and meekly mourned if conjugal happiness did not fall to their lot.

There was not much at her table that escaped the sparkling eyes of the Countess de Maurienva, and she considered her little dinner decidedly a success.

In the drawing-room she whispered to Stephana: "Do you see how magnanimous I am? I do not make the slightest fuss about having the Princess here for my Pierre. They don't have to meet slyly in other places while I try to delude myself into thinking that they do not meet. That is the modern wisdom."

To Roland it was a long evening. On the way home he gravely asked of Stephana: "Did you enjoy yourself?"

"Very much. I was glad to see Bertha Whiting again. We are going to spend the afternoon together tomorrow."

"I was in hope that you would give me tomorrow afternoon," Roland protested gently.

"Oh, dear, no. There are far too many things to do in Paris to trot around with one's husband."

### XXIII

STEPHANA's nature seemed to change from the night of the Countess de Maurienva's dinner. Her manner



toward Roland lost its different baffling moods and became coolly friendly; she treated him as if she had become one of those *mondaines* of the smart set whose lives have little to do with those of their husbands. Throwing herself into the Paris season with *abandon*, she lived only for each day's distraction, although half unconsciously she was ever wondering which of all these women was the one who held her husband's love. Estelle let drop a hint here, an innuendo there, but Stephana steadily ignored them. She would discuss her husband with no one.

The season this year was madly brilliant. It was at the height of the good times, and America had poured its million millionaires abroad with teeming pockets and ambitious wives.

Gay as was the life into which Stephana plunged, it could not satisfy her restless desire for activity. She went everywhere, for the exclusive Faubourg, as well as the richer, more cosmopolitan sections of society, welcomed her as heartily as Estelle had prophesied. "La Duchesse Américaine" soon became a personality. Stories of her beauty and charm, her dresses and extravagance, began to creep into the papers. About her, too, there hovered a halo of romance, since, no matter where the Duchess de Longtour went, nor how often, the Duke de Longtour always accompanied her. The public was quick to conclude that here, at last, had been a real love match, and this conduced not a little to Stephana's popularity, for the heart of the cynical old world always warms to a love story.

Stephana saw Ferdinand in one place or another almost every day, in spite of, or it may be because of, her knowledge that Roland disapproved of him. Yet Roland made no protest at this. He only became a little more grave, a little more taciturn as the days and weeks passed.

Deep in her own heart Stephana did not herself approve of her seeing so much of Ferdinand as she did. She cast her doubts from her, however.

Had she not given up her old standards, her old ideals, and was she not henceforth to live according to this newer, laxer code of morals and manners? Moreover, although she did not herself understand it, her disappointments in her love for her husband had left her hungering for love, and Ferdinand's respectful, constant adoration somehow soothed her.

Amid the incessant activity of her amusements Stephana had always the feeling that Roland was watching her, and it angered her to think that he did not trust her. "I suppose he judges me by these women here," she reflected bitterly, "or by himself!" And this was an added incentive to her friendship for Ferdinand. As for the latter, it was past the time for reflection with him; he was as genuinely in love with Stephana as it was in his self-indulgent nature to be.

There were a number of other American women in Paris, like Stephana, labeled with the titles they had bought with money sometimes honest, sometimes tainted, but no more tainted than the men whose titles it paid for. Like herself, these American women were spending their time in rushing from one gathering to another, as if the sole object of their lives was to be seen in as many different places as possible in the shortest time. Their husbands only occasionally accompanied them; for the most part they were too busy gambling away the money they had sold their titles for or squandering it on other women. In certain circles a man values a horse that is his, a wife that is another's.

And contemplating these other husbands, Stephana, after a while, began to feel grateful to the Duke for his respect of appearances, and for not letting the terms on which they lived be known, even while she was irritated by his constant watchfulness. Every morning he informed himself of her plans, and every day punctiliously appeared with her in public. Yet, in spite of her careless friendliness of manner and his unwavering politeness, the air became electrical. Both of them had

grown thin and nervous, and there was the tension between them that exists in the quiet before the storm. In not the slightest respect did Roland try to prevent her following her own whims and fancies, yet there occasionally crossed his face a look as if he were nearing the end of his forbearance; and once or twice Stephana noticed his jaw set in a way that caused her to wonder.

Of all her companions Stephana liked Bertha, Princess Montignolli, the best. There was honesty under her dashing manner. Her very flirtations were carried on in such a spirit of bravado that they became little more than play acting.

The Princess never said a word to Stephana about her own husband, although his infidelities were notorious. But one afternoon, as they were driving together in the Bois, they met the Prince with his latest purchase. Bertha did not even glance in the direction of the coming carriage, but her hand caught Stephana's in a convulsive clasp. Beyond this she made no sign, and in an instant her usual rattle of gay badinage continued, as if she were the last person in need of sympathy. Yet this one handclasp put a new face on the whole situation for Stephana. Was Bertha as unhappy as she was herself? And were her reckless flirtations only desperate attempts to "save her face"? Even if she were not deeply in love with her husband, what must she not suffer by being flouted as she was? And how gaily she bore herself, since this is the present-day fashion on a hypocritical old earth, which has always demanded that one should be becomingly sad or piously resigned or cheerfully frivolous, as the mode of the age might be.

Late that night, on their return from the theater, Stephana was sitting in her boudoir before a glimmering fire to dispel the touch of cool in the May evening. She was in her dressing gown, with her hair down her back, having sent the maid off to bed. She was thinking of Bertha and the incident of the afternoon, when a message

came from Roland asking if she were still up and could see him.

A minute later he entered the room. "I have come to you on a matter which, strictly speaking, is none of my business," he began.

"It must be very important, since it requires a midnight visit," she observed.

"It seems to be the only time that you are not occupied, and it is important—if the Princess Montignolli is as great a friend of yours as she seems to be," he answered.

"Has the Prince run away with a new chorus girl?" she inquired flipantly.

The Duke bit his lip and half turned away. Then he faced his wife with a spark of anger burning deep in his eyes.

"You speak of such things in a tone that is hardly becoming."

Stephana shrugged her shoulders, as if the subject were not worth discussing.

"What I have come about tonight," the Duke continued presently, repressing his momentary anger, "is this: the Princess Montignolli is indiscreet. She—"

"Indiscreet!" Stephana interrupted. "I don't wonder that you come to me about it. Discretion! That is the cardinal virtue. If one be only discreet, then nothing else one does matters."

The Duke de Longtour looked at his wife in amazement at the bitterly sarcastic tone in which she spoke.

"But certainly if one is innocent—as I believe your friend to be—one owes it to oneself to be also discreet. They are beginning to talk about her in the clubs, and a woman's reputation is too fragile a thing to be bandied about."

Stephana raised her eyebrows. "What would you have me do?"

"You might hint to her that it would be best to avoid going about so much with De Maurienvall."

"Why should she? The Prince cares little enough with whom she goes."

"The more reason for her to look

out for herself." He hesitated an instant. "There are men whom nothing interests except the pursuit of women. They have not even any real temporary affection for their victims—nothing except the excitement of a new conquest. No true friend of a woman would see her going with a man like this without trying to save her. Such a man is Pierre de Maurienville; and such also is Ferdinand de Tournelles."

"Are you warning *me*, now?" Stephana asked with a wry little smile.

"I am not warning you, for I think I am able to protect you. The Princess has no one to protect her; that is why her friends ought to do what they can."

"You think Ferdinand is making love to me?" Stephana harked back to her own case.

"Very gradually. He is studying you as yet."

"Perhaps that is why you give me so much of your society abroad?" she suggested, with a touch of scorn.

"Perhaps; and perhaps I have a few old-fashioned ideas about marriage. But may I ask you—since you have made the conversation personal—how long you are going to keep up your present mode of living? You are going it harder than any other woman in Paris. I have been hoping that your good sense would call a halt. What are you going to do tomorrow?" he broke off abruptly.

"I don't know," she answered sullenly.

"Stay at home and send for the Princess to come here. Keep her to luncheon, and we will go for a drive in the afternoon. You both need a quiet day. If you will write her a note now, I will see that it is sent the first thing in the morning."

Stephana wrote the note and gave it to him; and only after he had gone did she demand of herself passionately why it was she yielded to him so tamely. This power he still had over her enraged her more than all else. She burned with shame at the thought that, in spite of his irreproachable conduct with her in public, there were

probably many others besides the Countess de Maurienville who must know that the Duchess de Longtour was only a figurehead, and that another woman than his wife possessed the heart of the Duke de Longtour. That these people considered her lucky to have so "discreet" a husband was only an added insult.

## XXIV

THE Princess Montignolli was a tall, handsome young woman of the self-reliant American type which appears even more self-sufficient than it is. In answer to Stephana's note she came in the morning, her breezy, swaggering manner inviting no confidential talk, no intimate rebuke. Stephana had not appreciated how hard it would be to speak to her about her conduct with De Maurienville. With a Frenchwoman she might have reached her subject by devious approaches. With Bertha this was no more possible than to stalk a pyramid in an open desert. Thus at last Stephana blurted out:

"Do you like De Maurienville very much?"

A curious light came into Bertha's eyes, and she did not answer at once.

"He *was* amusing," she replied finally, with the slightest emphasis on the verb. Then bluntly: "Why do you ask me this question?"

As bluntly Stephana replied: "I am afraid people are talking about you and him."

"Well, why should I care?" Bertha returned defiantly. "They talk about pretty nearly everyone, don't they? Who spoke to you about it?"

Stephana told her of her conversation with Roland the night before.

Bertha walked to the window and stood looking down into the pretty courtyard for a full minute. When she turned there were tears in her eyes, and she exclaimed passionately:

"You are married to a decent man, and will never know the degrading things some of us come to know. To the Frenchwomen they don't seem to

matter, because they expect them. After a while they either bury themselves in their homes, or they follow their husbands' footsteps. But to us American girls, accustomed to our men, it is awful."

"I don't know that the men in our set in America are much better," Stephana answered lamely.

"Perhaps not, but the American atmosphere, at least, is clean. You have the public with you. Here, if a man is unfaithful to his wife, people think it only natural." Bertha covered her face with her hands for an instant, as if to shut out all that she had been through. "When we marry noblemen, the idea is that we marry them for their titles alone. But, my dear, why can't people realize that foreign men have an art of captivating women which our own men with their straightforward ways have not. We women—the most modern of us—are a little romantic. We are carried away by the romance of the man of title, by his social prestige and by the associations connected with his name. But we love the man, too. At least I did—I do now!"

Again she stared out of the window, while Stephana found no word to say that would help her.

"Yes, I care for him now, ridiculous as it may sound after the indignities I have suffered at his hands. A month ago—" There was a break in her voice, but she regained her composure. "A month ago I might have done anything, I was so desperate and miserable. I might have run away with Pierre. I *did* make up my mind definitely once to leave Giacomo. But then—I—I found a baby was coming, and that seemed to change everything again. Life is so complicated."

Stephana felt an unwonted sense of awe before Bertha. "Does he know?" she whispered.

"No."

She sat down on a stool and put her elbow on Stephana's lap, supporting her chin on her palm. Stephana caressed her hair and bent and kissed her. They both sat in silence for several minutes. Stephana had passed

over Bertha's praise of Roland at the time, since she could not discuss his shortcomings even with her friend; but now Bertha's words recurred to her to stab her. He was the man whom other American wives of noblemen envied her. Stephana closed her eyes and saw again the old Marquis de Chavonnay, and remembered his dying message that her sons should be brought up to be worthy of what his own son had not been. The maternal spirit reawakened in her, as it had on the night when the Dowager brought her the old Marquis's message. But she had not even this to console her for that love her husband could not give. Soon Bertha would be richer than she.

Her bitter reverie was broken in upon by her guest.

"When you asked me just now if I liked De Maurienvail, I was not quite honest with you. I *did* like him quite well. I was playing with fire, and I am not sure whether I shall not yet suffer for it. Giacomo once told me that when Pierre de Maurienvail paid attention to a woman, he paid a compliment to her husband. I was foolish enough to believe that if I made him jealous—if he saw that Pierre found me attractive—he would come back to me. That was how it began. But I don't believe that Giacomo ever cared for me at all, and then, somehow, I went further than I meant to; and once when I was very miserable I answered a letter of his—"

"Oh!" cried Stephana.

"My dear child, when a woman lives in this set, and her heart aches over an unfaithful husband, she is likely to do things to make you cry 'Oh!' I came pretty near doing worse than that. Don't shudder, dear. The paroxysm is past. And do you know who saved me? It was you! The night I saw you at the De Maurienvails' dinner you were so lovely to me that I became less lonesome and desperate. Then I learned about the baby. Before that I did not care what happened; but for its sake I must get hold of that letter."

"Won't De Maurienvail give it back?"

"He promised to several times, but kept putting it off. Then we had a terrible quarrel, and he practically threatened me with it. I don't know how he may use it now. He—well, perhaps he isn't so very much to be blamed, considering." Bertha possessed an impersonal sense of justice rare among men, rarer still among women. "I suppose he had a certain right to think that, since I had gone so far, I would go a good deal further. Oh, I *hate* Paris!" She threw out her arms in a passionate gesture. "I hate it as I used to love it. The point of view is awful! Estelle says that what a woman really has to remember when she grows old is how much she has been loved by men."

"But what shall you do about the motor trip we have all been planning to take to Biarritz next week?"

"Yes, I know. One can always be ill, though, and I don't suppose Giacomo would miss me."

Luncheon time came while they were still talking, and with it Roland, grave yet cheerful. Stephana did not know whether more to admire the serene countenance he always showed to outsiders, no matter what their own differences might be, or to resent his assumption of a manner which falsely led everyone to believe their relations more harmonious than they really were.

With his appearance the tension of the morning lessened, and the *déjeuner à la fourchette* was quite a gay little meal. In the afternoon the three of them took a long, leisurely motor ride into the country, with supper in a quaint little inn beyond Versailles which was not yet spoiled by the far-reaching arm of the automobilist with his liberal hand. It was nearly ten o'clock when they left Bertha at her home.

## XXV

IN her talk with Bertha, Stephana seemed to touch a tender reality again, amid the glittering hollowness and falsity of the life about her. The next

morning she spent several hours in the shops where baby clothes were sold, choosing the daintiest of them to give to Bertha. And she found a wonderful pleasure in handling the tiny bits of lace and linen, which make such appeal to the womanly imagination.

The morning was an idyllic eddy in the furious social current in which she had been whirling of late. If only she were doing this for herself! If she had to give thought to the dangers and responsibilities which went with the preparing of these little garments, how happily she would give up the present life she was leading!

The Duke had asked her how long she was going to continue this life. She wondered herself. In spite of the desperate way she had thrown herself into it, she never for a moment considered it a permanent occupation, as many women did—as her stepmother did. With them it was so serious an occupation as to acquire the dignity of a calling. It had its own magazines, like any other profession, and received its due columns in the newspapers. But Roland was right in supposing that it had never appealed to his wife in this light. And yet she could not go back to Touraine with him now, could find no interest in the placid pursuits there, knowing that every few weeks "business" would call him away to the other woman, whom he loved in his discreet yet constant fashion.

Thus she mused that night, when, just before going to bed, she almost guiltily opened the box of baby things and began to play with them. With a soft light in her eyes she twined the empty little sleeves around her neck. She closed her eyes and nestled her head against the filmy clothing, and felt the empty garments fill with pink and white baby flesh. Her lips trembled as they sought those of the imaginary child. But these little clothes were not for a miniature Roland; they were for a future Prince Montignolli, or Donna Bertha—poor little morsel, born into the purple to have its heart broken in due course or to break the hearts of others not yet dreamed of.

The meditations of the melancholy young woman were disturbed by the sound of wheels in the courtyard beneath her window. As she wondered what it could be, there came the muffled jar of the closing of the heavy front door. Stephana started up, clasping the little bodice to her bosom; her nerves were not what they had been in the country.

Who could it be at this late hour? She remembered the night a rider had brought the news of De Brissac's death to the chateau in Touraine. Could anything have happened to the Dowager?

She ran from her room, and in the hall met the Duke, fully dressed.

"Is it bad news from mamma?" she cried, her eyes wide with fear. "We ought never to have left her alone."

"No, I do not believe it is that," he answered, reassuring her, although himself alarmed.

They heard the sound of a woman's voice in the hall below.

"A woman!" Stephana exclaimed, glancing at her husband with quick suspicion, and letting the baby's bodice slip from her fingers.

Mechanically the Duke picked it up, but did not restore it to her, as a footman ran up the stairs with unusual haste to say that the Princess Montignolli wished to see Madame la Duchesse.

The Princess herself, ghastly pale, followed hard on the lackey, and Roland, after a glance at her, said to his wife: "I shall be in my rooms if you need me," and left them.

By the expression of Bertha's face Stephana knew that something serious had happened. Silently she took her arm and led her into her own room.

Bertha threw her cloak from her shoulders and sank into a chair. Like Stephana, she was in her night clothes.

"I have left him," she said. A shiver passed over her in the warm room.

Stephana touched her hand. It was icy cold. She poured her out a glass of cordial, which Bertha drank eagerly.

"Give me some more!" she said.

Shuddering from the strength of the liquor, she drained the glass a second time and held it out again.

"More!" she demanded.

Stephana set down the glass and came to her. "Bertha, dear!" she cried, taking her head in her arms.

The unhappy woman pushed her away. "Give me some more of that thing!" she cried.

Stephana tried to calm her growing excitement, but Bertha was rapidly losing all control of herself. "Give me some more of that!" she kept repeating. "Give me something to make me forget!"

At her wits' end what to do—for she thought Bertha was going out of her head—Stephana's glance fell upon the baby clothes she had been playing with. She snatched a little garment from the box and held it up.

"Look!"

Bertha stared at it uncomprehending. "What is it?" she asked dully.

"For your baby, dear."

For a moment longer Bertha mechanically regarded it, then broke into tears. She cried for a long time, but grew more rational amid her sobs. At last she dried her eyes, and turning her swollen face to Stephana, said:

"He struck me!"

Stephana took Bertha's head on her shoulder and kissed and petted her; and at the unquestioning sympathy the latter's tears flowed afresh. When she had regained control of herself, she continued:

"They were playing cards at the club tonight—Giacomo and Pierre—and Giacomo won a great deal of money. At last, I don't know how, Pierre wagered my letter—"

"The unutterable cad!" Stephana cried.

"Giacomo won again. He came home and showed it to me, and then I think I went out of my mind at the things he accused me of. I told him if he could buy mistresses with my money, I could have a lover if I wanted to. Then he struck me—he says he will kill me. What am I to do?" she wailed, no more the self-reliant girl of



old, now only the unhappy wife, unprotected and unstrung.

For a little time Stephana did not try to do more than give her the physical petting and soothing which is of avail when all else fails. Presently she said, with a last encouraging pat:

"Wait a minute while I go and consult Roland."

What a comfort it was to her, as she was hurrying from the room, to have Roland to consult! She found herself relying on him in an emergency as implicitly as Valentine herself. Noiselessly she passed into his suite. It was the first time she had been in it since the day he showed her over the house. These were the rooms he lived in! She lingered in the first and then passed into his bedroom. On the table by the bed stood a silver frame with the picture of a woman in it. By the dim light she could not distinguish the face. She threw back her head proudly and marched past it. Then she turned, a fierce pang of jealousy in her heart, and snatched up the frame.

It contained the photograph of herself, which she had given to him when they were engaged. Curiously enough, the sight of her own features did not pacify her. "I might have known that he would not do anything that was not correct," she thought, a scornful smile curling her lips.

On the threshold of the next room, his sitting room, she stopped. He was in a chair, beneath the lamp, so occupied examining the little bodice he had picked up that he had not heard her approach.

He sprang to his feet when aware that she was looking at him. Seeing her eyes on the garment in his hand, he said:

"You dropped it when the Princess came."

Stephana was acutely aware of the puzzled note in his voice, and explained: "It is for her—for Bertha's baby."

"But were you not in bed when she came?"

"No," she answered. She was reluctant to acknowledge what she had

been doing. It seemed to share her inmost thoughts too much with him. Then in an unaccountable change of mood she added defiantly: "I was playing with it. But I have come to tell you about the trouble she is in."

When he had heard her story his lips closed tightly, and his forehead wrinkled in thought. At length he looked up at his wife.

"She must not stay out of her house tonight, whatever happens."

"But he struck her and threatens to kill her. How can she go home?"

He did not seem to hear her. "I must see him," he murmured, and went to the telephone.

He rang up the Prince's residence. A servant answered that his master was not at home. Roland called up in turn half a dozen clubs, and when he found the Prince at none of them, he again called up his house.

"Tell your master," he said to the servant, "that it is of the utmost importance to him that he should speak to the Duc de Longtour at once."

A minute later the Prince himself answered, his voice still hoarse with anger. "What is it?" he demanded.

"I want to see you immediately at my house on a matter that concerns you very closely," Roland said.

There was a pause before the Prince made up his mind that he would come.

Roland hung up his receiver. "I will see what I can do to mend matters when he arrives."

"And now I will return to her," Stephana said, confident that Roland would manage it somehow.

"You need not go all the way around," the Duke said as she was going.

He put his hand on the edge of a panel in the wall, which held a painting by Watteau, and it slid back, leaving a narrow opening. Bewildered, Stephana stepped through the aperture and found herself in her own bedroom.

"Good-bye!" Roland said with a faint smile.

The panel slid back into place, and Stephana was staring at the simpering

face of a companion Watteau, whom she had never suspected of being capable of concealing anything.

## XXVI

PRINCE MONTIGNOLLI had indulged his whims, small or great, all his life, until he had come to believe that the world was treating him very unkindly if it crossed him in anything. In spite of his years he was little more than a spoiled child, weak as are those who always indulge themselves, but as capable of generous impulses as of quick furies. He was of medium height, dark and handsome, of the Latin type, which the Anglo-Saxon always regards suspiciously, with a vivacious disposition and endowed with the doubtful blessing of "temperament."

When De Maurierval, balked in his pursuit of the wife and enraged by losing fifteen thousand francs to the husband, had staked the Princess's letter against the Prince's winnings and lost, Montignolli had sprung to his feet and slapped the other's face. Yet both then and during the subsequent arrangements for the duel his anger was primarily directed against his wife. That the Princess should dare dishonor his name! He himself might compromise this same name with a score of women; that was only the natural wear and tear of a noble name. But for his wife to drag it into the mud by behaving with another man as other men's wives were behaving with him—that was another matter.

In the code of his set there was implicit belief in the divine right of man to amuse himself as he wished. A woman, if discovered, paid the price of her indiscretion. In this was only carried to its logical conclusion the code of the greater world outside—of Nature herself.

"Well, what is it so important that I have to see you at this time of night?" the Prince blustered when Roland came down into the library to meet him. He was laboring under an

excitement that hardly left him conscious of his manner.

"Sit down, Montignolli, and have a cigar," the Duke said, indicating the box on the table.

The Prince glared at his host and spurned the box with a gesture of loathing, but since Roland was following his own advice and fully occupied in cutting off the end of his cigar, both the glare and the gesture were wasted on him. For a moment the Italian stood irresolute, then automatically followed Roland's example.

They sat down. "Now what is it you want to see me about?" the Prince repeated sharply.

"The Princess Montignolli is upstairs with my wife."

The Prince sprang to his feet and threw his cigar violently away. "*Corpo di Cristo!*" he shouted.

The Duke let nothing interfere with his enjoyment of his cigar. He puffed at it with the attention its excellence merited.

"You know she is an intimate friend of the Duchesse de Longtour," he observed presently. "When a woman is in trouble, what is more natural than that she should go to her friend?"

The tone of his voice was questioning, as if he were interested in the Prince's views on the subject.

"I shall kill her!" the latter cried. "For this and for other things. Bah! These American women have no sense of dignity."

"They have a great deal more than we have," the Duke observed. "What are the other things you would kill her for, Montignolli?"

"De Longtour! You forget yourself!"

"My dear fellow, there is no use becoming theatrical. Let us face the situation with our reason, not with our passions. You have driven Madame Montignolli out of your house at midnight. She takes refuge here. Now what do you propose to do? You can't kill her here very well—and you must admit that it would be unreasonable to ask her to return with you in order that you might annihilate her

at home." He looked up at the ceiling and blew a mouthful of smoke toward it. "Tomorrow she will engage passage on the first steamer for America and go back to her own people, a broken woman, who has bought her experience of life pretty dearly."

The Prince's rage flared higher. "If you mention money to me—" he threatened. "I hear enough of that from her."

"I'm only trying to present the case rationally to you."

"And by what right do you present the case to me at all?" he demanded furiously.

"By the right of a friend."

"Since when are you so intimate a friend of mine?"

"Since the Princess Montignolli deigned to accept my hospitality. Come now, Montignolli, let us be a little dispassionate."

The Prince walked up and down the floor in great agitation. "Dispassionate!" he muttered. "Be dispassionate when a man puts up my wife's letter as a stake!" He tramped the length of the room twice in silence. Suddenly he turned to the Duke. "In my place what would you do, monsieur?"

"If we lived in a different world I should say, 'Take the cur and wipe up the gutters of the city with him'; but in our civilization we must protect our women more delicately. You brought it on yourself, my friend, when all is said and done. You left the Princess too much alone, and Paris is no place for women with empty hearts. The atmosphere is dangerous. I admit that she has been indiscreet, but I tell you, and Madame de Longtour will tell you, that that is all."

"But the letter in De Maurienva's possession—"

"The best proof that she has not wronged you," Roland interrupted. "You would never have seen it had she been willing to buy it back with what many a woman in her position would not have considered an extravagant price. Had you been nearer her, I believe she would have gone to you with her troubles. As it was, she

told Madame de Longtour. I believe her word; I do not believe De Maurienva's. The fact that he wagered the letter shows what a cad he is, and also that he has found it useless. If the Princess were a weak woman she would have been dragged down by fear. That she made the letter useless to De Maurienva shows her strength. Moreover, my dear Montignolli, your wife may still care for you. Women are unaccountable creatures," he ended, with a glimmer of humor wholly lost on the Prince.

"She never cared for me. It was my title she married. She told me so herself."

"When she was angry with you? Perhaps when she discovered some amourette of yours?" Roland threw in.

"Y-e-s," the Prince admitted, a trifle shamefaced for the first time.

"Philip drunk and Philip sober are not so different as a woman angry and a woman loving."

"And her money! Every time there is a difference between us she throws that at me. It is 'My money! My money!' until I can stand it no longer."

"It hurts, I admit; but isn't it the truth?"

"It is also true that we make them noble—that we raise them from nobodies to somebodies. Do we tell that every moment?"

"There you are making a mistake, Montignolli. They are not nobodies when we marry them. Without us they can rule the world; and without them we cannot even clothe ourselves decently unless our tailors give us credit—which they would not do if it were not for these same American girls."

The Prince stared at the Duke as if the latter had gone mad.

Roland threw back his head and laughed. "We are pathetic figures, my dear fellow, we, the nobles and the descendants of great names. Incapable of supporting ourselves, when we have nothing else to sell we sell our names, and consider that we lift up these beautiful young women who buy them." He laughed again. "Lift

them, we who are down and out—we who are the remnants of a worn out aristocracy sprung from the whims of kings—and courtesans? Some of our forefathers did great deeds, but what have we ourselves done in an age when what one is counts for more than what one was? We have no intrinsic worth at all. Our titles have only what the economists call a 'scarcity value.'"

"I thought you were proud of your name," the Prince said, wondering.

"So I am—sentimentally, and because of the great deeds that have been accomplished by those who bore that name. But I am not proud of myself, I, the last of the name."

"De Longtour!" exclaimed the Prince. "Are you mad, or have you become a Socialist? It is indecent, the way you talk. You are putting these half-civilized American shopkeepers and mine diggers above us."

"Our children will be the grandchildren of these shopkeepers and mine diggers, and it is due to the latter that we can give them the advantages our birth demands."

During his talk with the Duke, Montignolli had grown calmer. Now he faced his host, and, drawing a letter from his pocket, waved it in the air and demanded:

"What would you do to your wife if you had come into possession of such a letter in such a manner as I did?"

"To my wife?" Roland mused. "I think I should present her the letter and ask her to be more careful in the future. I should also tell her the manner in which it had come into my possession. She would never forget either. I believe, Montignolli, that you could make the Princess forget her money and your title and like you for yourself. You are worth more than De Maurienvall—and you are her husband."

Montignolli stood brooding over Roland's advice, which was so foreign to all his own impulses and ideas. The Duke came up to him and laid a kindly hand on his shoulder.

"On which side of the Atlantic would you wish your son to be born?" he asked.

"My son!" the Prince exclaimed, starting.

"You did not know? I found my wife playing with this tonight." He drew from his pocket the baby garment. "She told me she had bought it for the Princess. That is the only way I happen to know."

Montignolli stared at the bit of linen and lace, fascinated. Like many Italians, the thought of having children was very dear to him.

"I—I—should like to see my wife," he stammered. "Will you ask her if I may?"

## XXVII

## DEAREST STEPHANA:

We are going to Italy as soon as Giacomo is able. Am I happy? I do not know, dear. But I have a hope for the future, and I had not that before. Whatever I have I owe to you, and I pray that you may never know sorrow.

BERTHA.

Stephana sat in her room, holding the letter in her hand. She reread the last line and laughed aloud. "'That you may never know sorrow!'" she repeated. "That is almost humorous."

It was two days since Bertha had come to her at midnight, distracted. Now she was nursing her husband, who had been wounded in the duel with De Maurienvall.

The motor trip to Biarritz was to come off the next day. The Countess de Maurienvall was to be of the party. Give it up just because Pierre and Giacomo had had a little quarrel? Oh, dear, no! She laughed in great amusement when one of her friends asked her the question. Pierre had gone to Norway—he had always desired to see its famous fiords—but there were plenty of others to take his place, and Estelle saw no reason why she should make a tragedy out of a silly quarrel about some little indiscretion of the Princess's.

Just why Stephana herself was going she could not have told. It was not

for love of the company in general; certainly not for love of Estelle. But she had reached that stage of nervous exhaustion when she felt that she must be going somewhere, doing something, every minute. Perhaps the knowledge that Roland wished her not to go may have stimulated her. She had become very perverse of late.

What an odd jumble it all was, she ruminated, with the letter in her hand—the decorous duel and the auto trip; one man's honor assuaged because an offending man further wounded him; the first man's wife reconciled to him, and the second man's wife going gaily off to Biarritz as if nothing had happened!

A momentary disgust of her whole environment seized Stephana, a desire to flee from it all. She shook off the feeling. Whither could she flee? Surely not to America, where the refulgence of her brilliant match still lingered. Not to Touraine. There was no place on this broad earth where she could turn for contentment and rest. And Roland would never find himself in a duel. She laughed at the bare thought. He had the English idea of the ridiculousness of dueling. Besides, whom could he fight? She went over the half-dozen men who were to be of the party tomorrow. When she came to De Tournelles the color rose faintly into her wan cheeks. Yes, perhaps Roland might fight him. Ferdinand was certainly in love with her, although she had never taken his love making seriously. He was too expert at the game. Since coming to Paris she had appreciated this better than she had in Touraine. He was in love with her today and would be with another tomorrow, a veritable butterfly of passion. She could not imagine him the center of a real tragedy.

Stephana saw Roland for the first time that day at dinner. He gave an involuntary exclamation of admiration when his eyes rested on her. She was dressed in a frock designed for her by the celebrated Almy, the artist who will undertake to produce garments only for such women as inspire him

—a sufficiently large number, however, to bring him in a princely income.

When Roland and Stephana were drinking their coffee in the library after dinner, she asked casually: "Are you coming with me to the Countess de la Motte's tonight?"

Roland glanced at her in irritated dismay. "Do you mean to tell me that you propose going out tonight, when you have to make an early start tomorrow for Biarritz?"

"I promised Madame de la Motte to come to hear Armand Capot read his latest poem."

"And do you care very much for Monsieur Capot's poem?"

"Not in the least."

"Then why not write a little note explaining why you cannot come?"

"But I am all dressed," she objected.

"If you really want to show your pretty gown, let us drive over there for a minute and explain in person the reason for your not staying."

"You are rather insulting," Stephana said coldly.

"I did not mean to be insulting. Your gown is quite sufficient excuse for wishing to go out."

"Thank you. I intend to go for the evening, however."

Into Roland's eyes came a gleam of anger.

"You are not going out tonight," he said quietly.

"Indeed! Perhaps you will use force to prevent me!" she said, raising her eyebrows.

"Possibly—if it is necessary."

Stephana rose to her feet. "I am curious to learn in what manner you will do it."

He rose, too. "What need is there of discussing what will not arise? Your good taste will save us from this unpleasantness."

She looked him straight in the eyes. "I am going out tonight," she repeated.

For a second they faced each other, he standing between her and the door. Then he stepped aside.

"I beg your pardon," he said. "I ought not to have used the word

'force.' But will you not do this for me?" He laid his hand on her arm and drew her gently to the mirror. "Look! You are worn out. I can't stand aside and let you kill yourself. You are in positive need of a good night's rest before the long day tomorrow. Now let me ring and send word that you will not want the carriage. You do not care for these people; why should you put yourself out for them?"

"How do you know whom I care for?" she asked sullenly.

Roland leaned a little toward her. "A woman who plays with baby clothes at midnight is not one to care for the set Estelle goes with."

Stephana turned brusquely away. She could not look into his eyes when he spoke to her thus without breaking down.

The Duke stepped to the wall and pressed an electric button. A footman answered the summons.

"Monsieur rang?"

"Yes. Madame la Duchesse wishes you to take a note to Madame la Comtesse de la Motte."

Stephana sat down at the desk, wrote her note and gave it to the man.

"I cannot tell you how grateful I am," Roland said when they were again alone. He came nearer to his wife. "I have another favor to ask of you. There is no need of staying at Biarritz the fortnight the others are going to. After a day or two, will you go with me to the De Chavonnay chateau in Brittany? There you can rest, and perhaps we can come to know each other better."

Stephana stood irresolute, her eyes turned away. The old power of Roland's which she could not resist surged over her at his appeal and his physical nearness.

"Surely by this time you are tired of this way of living, and of these people," he continued. "You were not made for them any more than I am. Will you not—after two days in Biarritz—go with me to Brittany, and see if, alone together amid the quiet there, we cannot come to some understand-

ing? Why should we live like enemies, when we might be friends?"

He held out his hand to her in his pleading; but his last words tormented the wound ever aching in her heart, as his first words had almost won her over.

"Friends!" she repeated under her breath. She did not want his friendship; his love he could not give her.

"Please do not let us explain tonight. Only tell me that, after a short stay in Biarritz, you will go with me to Brittany."

Stephana was loth not to free her mind now and at once of the expression of all the pain and humiliation it harbored.

"Very well," she said at length; "I will go to Brittany when you wish. As for the understanding—" She shrugged her shoulders and turned toward the door. "Good night."

## XXVIII

Nor an untoward incident marred the journey to Biarritz. In Estelle's car were Ferdinand and a very deaf aunt of hers whom she had invited on a sudden whim of generosity—"because she was deaf," surmised the Marquesa Bignatelli to the Russian Prince Dionosoff, who provided a devoted ear for all her remarks. The Marquesa had good-naturedly come up from her villa in Biarritz to make this trip, but her good nature rarely extended as far as her tongue.

The one person who did not find the long, pleasant day entirely satisfactory was Ferdinand de Tournelles. Estelle mischievously noted his moodiness toward the close of the journey.

"You look drooping, my friend. You did not like it, perhaps, that when I invited our fair American cousin into my car after luncheon her tall husband calmly included himself in the invitation?"

"It crowded the car," Ferdinand answered indifferently.

Estelle's eyes danced. The exhilaration of the weather and the swift,



smooth movement had kept her in impish spirits all day.

"You did not think of a companion for me," she replied reproachfully. "You would have left me to point out the beauties of the landscape to my worthy aunt, while you were immersed in—philosophical—conversation with the American—eh?"

"Deuced *bourgeois* of a man never to let his wife out of his sight," Ferdinand growled, hardly trying to hide his discomfiture.

"Never mind; his watchdog faithfulness is a great compliment to your powers."

"Well, I don't care for such open compliments," Ferdinand retorted.

"Be careful, Ferdinand; that was almost an epigram. Epigrams and love don't go together. A man who makes epigrams can only be in love with himself. It is the moony, love-sick swain who wins out four times out of five. That's the way Germaine was captured by that penniless young officer who hadn't a thing to recommend him except his disabilities. By the way, I hear that she has taken a villa a few miles out of Biarritz to moulth her mourning in."

"Really!"

"You are not interested. Well, neither am I—unless—let me see—" She turned suddenly to her companion and asked: "You still have that hunting lodge of yours on the edge of the Pyrenees?"

"Yes; I was thinking of giving some sort of little *fête* there while we were in Biarritz. It's hardly an hour's ride by motor."

Estelle smiled broadly.

"What is it?" Ferdinand asked.

"Nothing—only an idea. The Fates sometimes play into the hands of an industrious young person like me."

De Tournelles looked at her doubtfully. "I mistrust your playing with the Fates, my pretty cousin."

"You of all persons should not mistrust me. It was of your success I was thinking—and of Germaine and her villa, the location of which I happen to know."

Ferdinand still regarded her doubtfully. "Is it over Germaine you are smiling? I thought you two never got along together. Have you experienced a change of heart since she lost her husband?"

Estelle made a face. "I don't care for her any more than I used to—it's Roland that likes her better than he does me. Just the same, it was over her that I was smiling. Roland hasn't yet learned that she is here. I shall tell him—when it suits my little plans."

"What plans are those?"

"If they blossom I will let you know. By the way, have you heard that the De Longtours are going to stay in Biarritz only two or three days?"

"The devil!" Ferdinand muttered.

"Oh, no, not the devil; only Roland again—another compliment to you. But look there! Isn't that your eminently respectable brother coming down the road in his runabout?"

It was indeed Casimir d'Erouville, who had been lost among the Pyrenees for three weeks, but, happening to learn of this trip, he had rushed down to meet them. Giving his car to the chauffeur, he clambered eagerly into Roland's machine and rode there the rest of the way. His gay, simple presence sent a wave of homesickness over Stephana for the country life of Touraine with which he was associated, and she thought with more pleasure than hitherto of her promise to go to Brittany.

She slept well that night after the long day in the open, and woke late the next morning, rested in body and nerves. With a feeling of pleasant languor she had her chocolate brought to her in bed and afterward dressed at her leisure. She was hardly ready when word was brought up to her that Estelle was waiting to see her, and a minute later that never tiring person tripped into her sitting room to propose a plan for the morning.

"Come with me in my car to the dearest little inn in all France—just we two and nobody else. It is our only chance for a quiet time together."

There will be something doing all the rest of the time we're here—and you deserting us in two days! For a wonder there's nothing on for today until the Marquesa's garden party tonight. We'll stay to luncheon, and play about in an old rose garden. It's a day when you could be happy digging holes in the earth. We *will* dig holes, or, if you're too proud, *I'll* dig holes while you pluck roses. No, don't try to think of any objections, for there aren't any. And you needn't consult your precious Roland. I met him half an hour ago, and he's off in his motor on some jaunt of his own; so you are quite free."

Sweeping her off her feet, Estelle had Stephana in her car and gliding through the country before she knew it. The day was certainly excuse enough for being out in the open country, and Estelle rattled on so amusingly that Stephana's vague dislike of her vanished. Whatever of malice there might be in the Countess de Maurienval was generally so overlaid with high spirits that one could hardly believe in its existence.

"We will go by a rather roundabout way, though it is not far, and we can return by the more direct route if you wish. It will give us an appetite for luncheon—and I tell you that Mère Baudoux's meals are worth some little pains in the matter of acquiring an appetite."

They arrived at their destination, a little white house set in a luxuriant garden of roses of every kind and color. A trellis of red roses arched the entrance, and there was little about the place to suggest the inn, except the effusive welcome of the landlady.

At the back of the garden a knoll was crowned by a summer house, evidently intended for little meals. From it one had an outlook over the back of a larger villa and its wide, rambling garden.

"Let us sit in the summer house," Estelle said. "The sun has really become uncomfortably warm, and it will be delightful to rest here in the shade. When luncheon is ready," she added

to Madame Baudoux, "you may bring it out here."

To Stephana the sun did not seem at all too warm, but she acquiesced willingly in Estelle's plan.

"What a delightful place this would be for a honeymoon!" the Countess exclaimed, with a wave of her hand at the rose-sprinkled garden. "I suppose you are wishing you had Roland here with you instead of my humble self. Now don't try to deny it. My feelings are not at all hurt. A woman never stands a chance with another woman against a lover. And there is no doubt that Roland has quite a caprice for you at present. That is what it is to be admired by other men. It makes a man in love even with his own wife. Poor Pierre! He was quite sad at having to go off and visit the Aurora Borealis in Norway just now—I mean the fiords. My dear, you must always try to have some other man wild over you. It's the only way to be happy though married."

Remembering poor Bertha's venture under this guidance, Stephana shook her head.

"I am afraid that is a Frenchwoman's game, and I should not be expert at it."

Estelle de Maurienval laughed her infectious laugh. "My very precious one, you *are* a Frenchwoman, because you have married a Frenchman—and Roland, in spite of his English education, *is* a Frenchman. Don't you see how fascinated he is by you, simply because you have fascinated other men? Suppose you had had no success in Paris, do you imagine he would care to be seen so constantly with you as he is? Look at the Montignollis! They are having a second honeymoon, just because my Pierre found her attractive; and if this will work with the volatile Giacomo, it will work with any man."

To argue seriously with the Countess when she expressed her light philosophy seemed ridiculous to Stephana. But the Countess required no argument to-day to keep her spring of conversation welling over. She apparently wished

for no rest, in spite of the comfortable chairs she had had brought out from the inn; nor did she remember her proposed innocent occupation of digging holes in the earth. Her vivacity was almost feverish. She forsook her chair for the wooden bench running around the summer house. From it she sprang up to examine the vines clambering up the trellis work, and all the time she talked, till Stephana found herself wishing for a little interval of quiet.

"Oh, look!" Estelle began, then stopped herself.

Some tension in the tone caused Stephana to glance up in the direction in which Estelle was staring. About fifty yards away in the next garden Roland was walking with a handsome young woman and a child. Her arm was through his in an attitude of assured possession, while on the other side the little boy was holding his hand. They were strolling across the garden and were lost presently around the corner of the house.

Stephana sat as if turned to stone till they were gone. Her first coherent thought was the intuition which flashed through her mind that Estelle had brought her here to see this very thing. This explained her nervousness, her choosing the summer house to wait in, all her maneuvers which had led up to this dénouement. In Stephana, as she realized this, the strongest instinct rose to hide from her enemy the hurt she was enduring, to get away without tears, without a breakdown to afford the Countess satisfaction.

"I am sorry," stammered Estelle with every appearance of contrition. "Who would have thought that he would come up here when you were—"

Stephana rose to her feet, disregarding the halting explanations of the Countess.

"Since you have accomplished that for which you brought me here, there is no use of our staying for luncheon, is there?" she asked with perfect self-possession.

For once the Countess de Maurienval was at a loss for words.

## XXIX

WHEN Roland returned after luncheon and wished to see her, Stephana sent word that she was going to rest all the afternoon. She ate nothing all day, and spent the time in her room, in a wild fury against her husband that made her absolutely insensible of the passage of time. She was the more angry now because Roland had always appealed to the higher side of her nature—as if he had the right! Infinitely she would have preferred, she told herself, a man like De Maurienval, like Montignolli, like Ferdinand. Ferdinand! He seemed an honest man compared to her hypocritical husband. At least, none of the three lived daily lies; they pretended to be no better than they were.

Go to Brittany and come to some understanding with him? Yes, some understanding that would insure him against the possibility of a public scandal, while permitting him to continue to go his own way, as he had done hitherto. She recalled the case of a certain titled Frenchman wedded to one of America's daughters, who had forced her to adopt and legitimize his mistress's son, since she, his lawful wife, had borne him no heir. Perhaps the Duke de Longtour desired some such "understanding" as this with her, since otherwise his noble name would become extinct.

His son! *There* was the bitterest pang of all. Somehow it had never occurred to Stephana that there might be a child. His existence put the seal of finality on the situation. What was bad enough before became impossible now.

Stephana did not know how quickly, how slowly the time passed. It might have been a minute—it might have been an eon, when word came up from the Duke asking at what time she would be ready to go to the Marquesa Bignatelli's garden party.

"A garden party!" Stephana laughed aloud. It was not a hysterical laugh; she had got beyond that. Yes, she would go to the garden party—go

as the old French nobility went to the guillotine, with a laugh on their lips, their heads high and despair in their hearts.

In the lobby of the hotel, as the Duke and Duchess de Longtour passed through it on the way to their car, was sitting a slight man of striking appearance. In the thirties, his hair was turning gray, and deep lines of thought were on his forehead. By his features he was either a Jew or had Jewish blood in him. He was watching those that came and went, idly, yet with something in his glance that bespoke more than the ordinary man's interest in humanity.

When his eyes rested on Stephana it was as if he were fascinated by the sight of her. He leaned slightly forward and scrutinized her features keenly. And, indeed, there was an almost unearthly quality to her pale beauty tonight.

From her he naturally glanced at her companion, and instantly was on his feet with an exclamation of delight, his hand outstretched toward Roland. The latter returned his greeting, and then presented him to his wife.

"But what are you doing here, Doctor?" Roland asked. "I thought you had established yourself at Toulouse. You may not be aware, Stephana, that evil-minded germs are more afraid of Dr. Bartholemy than they are of all the armies in the world."

"Ah, madame," Dr. Bartholemy protested, "it is a safe compliment. The Duke knows that germs have no fear whatever of armies." He turned to Roland. "I am on a little vacation. I find rest easiest among the frivolous. My occupation keeps me so much among the realities of life that I recuperate among the artificialities."

"You are not, by chance, intending to refresh yourself at the Marquesa Bignatelli's tonight, are you?" Stephana asked.

"Yes, I am going," Dr. Bartholemy replied eagerly. "I had intended going late, but now I shall go early."

"Come along with us," Roland urged hospitably. "There is plenty of room in the car."

"Thank you, but I am not quite ready to go yet."

"Then *au revoir*," Stephana said with a gracious nod.

Dr. Bartholemy looked thoughtfully after her as she walked away, her head never more proudly erect than tonight. "The most beautiful woman I have seen," he thought. Then, shaking his head: "And near a breakdown, if ever I saw the signs."

During the short mile to the Marquesa's the subject of the doctor's meditations was silent. She carefully avoided the slightest physical contact with her husband. Roland, disregarding her aloofness, tried to tell her how he had spent the day, but presently desisted. She was paying no attention to a word he said. Of what interest to her were the lies—or the half-truths doing the work of lies—he was telling her?

When Stephana entered the garden of her hostess the Russian, Prince Dionossoff, caught sight of her and stopped to stare.

"A lovely creature!" he ejaculated to himself, lost in admiration.

He was not the only man to be fascinated by Stephana. Men clustered about her tonight even more than they had in Paris, and her lips spoke the sprightly words required of her. In men suffering sometimes brings out the nobility of their natures; it rarely inspires them to brilliancy; but some women have the gift of becoming more brilliant the more they suffer. Stephana was of these, and only the man of science—and one woman—that night suspected her of being in any but the best of spirits. To her everything was intensified, rarefied. The lights were brighter, the voices clearer and more musical. She could hear twice as far as usual. All values were higher. It was as if she were breathing pure oxygen; she was living life in the *n*th degree tonight. The weirdly lighted garden chimed in with her mood. The whole beautiful world was illusion and unreal, like this fairyland of a garden—candles and colored paper! Hopelessness underlay the universe.

Dr. Bartholemy, arriving a half hour after the De Longtours, managed by quiet persistence to secure a quarter of an hour of Stephana's attention. They went off to an arbor at some distance from the majority of the guests, and somewhat bluntly he brought up the subject of a debt of gratitude he owed to Roland.

"The Duke does not care to have people remind him of the service he has been to them, but I should like to speak to you about it. During my military service a sergeant accused me falsely. I will spare you the details. It was an infinitesimal Dreyfus case; but to me, poor and friendless, it was not infinitesimal—it was large as the Pyramids and terrible as death. As death, do I say? It was more; for I had made up my mind to kill myself, when your husband saved me. It was not as if we were friends. In our different stations in life we could not even be acquaintances. But now that I am no longer poor and friendless, I would lay down my life for him."

Dr. Bartholemy spoke with an intensity of emotion which almost mastered him, but Stephana regarded him as though hearing nothing. Nothing anyone could say now made any difference. Whatever his good qualities, they were not enough to outweigh the bad with her any longer. She did not even wish to hear his name mentioned; and presently Dr. Bartholemy, though more than ever interested in her case, withdrew in favor of the worldlings who strove for the honor of her attention.

### XXX

FERDINAND DE TOURNELLES arrived late at the Marquesa's. He met the Countess de Maurierval on the arm of an Austrian officer. She had quite recovered the equanimity she had lost in the morning.

"Oh, Ferdinand," she called out, as he was hurrying past with a preoccupied air, "I have cast your horoscope, and I find that your star is at its zenith. If you have any great enterprise on

hand, this is the moment for succeeding."

The Marquis de Tournelles smiled faintly at his cousin's words, but did not try to detain her when the Austrian drew her away, jealously demanding to know whether his star, too, were in an auspicious quarter.

And Estelle laughed—laughed at her escort and at Ferdinand and at the whole man sex, which winds itself so pliantly about a woman's finger.

Ferdinand hurried on, seeking Stephana. Man's passion waxes and wanes as the tide. Had Stephana been the most calculating of coquettes, she could not have adopted a course more likely to inflame his love than hers of the last few weeks. Unaccustomed to denying himself anything, his passion for his cousin's wife was consuming him. Tonight he was a man demented. Reason had ceased to guide him. To obtain the woman he wanted he would have brought destruction to the earth, have stopped the stars in their course. Life's worth no more existed for him without the possession of this beautiful creature.

And never in his victorious career had he been so held at arm's length. He was a man before whom the hearts of women fell easily—of such women, at least, as usually attracted him. For the first time now he loved one of another type, and this love gripped him powerfully. Nor was his love wholly base; its very strength lay in its appeal to his higher nature. When he was with her there stirred in him impulses toward good which had been dormant during a long winter.

Yet there was nothing of renunciation in his love. He would water his aspirations, sprout virtue and blossom nobility only if Stephana were the gardener. He had no impulse to strive for the heights by himself. On the contrary, denied her, he would avenge himself upon an obstinate fate by being worse than ever. There was much of the logic of the small boy in Ferdinand.

Why had he not gone to America instead of Roland? He entertained not the smallest doubt that he could have

won her, had he gone. Even now he could not really be convinced that he should not obtain a return of his love from her, since he wanted it so intensely. It seemed only reasonable. Himself a worshiper of his whims, the whimsicality of the things that happen had not descended upon him hitherto. A state of bewildered, exasperated incredulity was his attitude toward a fate which could accord him many ignoble conquests, and then deny him this one which would make the paths of virtue attractive.

The Marquis had been detained in coming to the Marquesa's, or Dr. Bartholemy would hardly have been able to secure his quarter of an hour alone with Stephana. When he found her he attached himself to her train of admirers, and one by one the other men fell away and left him in possession of the field. He was so absorbed in Stephana that he barely noticed the presence or absence of other men. When at last he awoke to their being alone, he begged her to go with him to a bower at the far end of the garden. Stephana rose and went with him. It did not matter to her where she sat.

This end of the garden overlooked the moonlit ocean, and there were few lights. It was very still where they were. The waves lapped the rocks beneath them, and the moon glided imperceptibly across the indigo sky. Some Indian conjurers had charmed even lovers to the other end of the garden.

Ferdinand sat drawn back into the shadow, whence his eyes might ceaselessly devour the beauty of her face. He did not speak. He was in the grip of emotions which rendered words futile.

Stephana, after the effort she had made to talk to other men, was grateful to him for his silence. She let her memory travel back to the morning, to that other garden with the other woman and the child, whose eyes she pictured gray, like those of Roland. It was the child that made it all hopeless. It gave the other woman rights superior to those conferred by the rites of church and state.

And from them Roland had come to her, not cold and indifferent, but carefully polite, considerate, desirous of telling her how he had spent the day—*how he had spent the day*—lest she should feel neglected and hurt.

Tomorrow he expected her to go with him to Brittany, there to come to some "understanding." And she felt that, in spite of what she knew, in spite of what she had seen, she could not trust herself to resist him. She knew the power he had over her, the influence of his voice, and if he chose to plead—She was not strong enough to fight for her ideals against the man whom she had chosen to be her husband.

Fear swept through every fiber of her being, and with it an uncontrollable wish to flee from him to the uttermost ends of the earth. She turned to the Marquis.

"Ferdinand! I want to leave Roland. Will you help me? Is there a train? I want to go tonight."

Ferdinand pulled himself slowly together and leaned forward into the moonlight, his burning eyes searching her face.

"You are going to leave Roland?" he asked huskily. For a fleeting instant the hope darted into his heart that it was for him she was leaving her husband.

"Yes, I want to go away," she repeated. In her utter misery she had to confide in someone, and Ferdinand had always been kind. Bit by bit she told him all—what Estelle had hinted at and what she herself had seen that morning. And in Ferdinand, listening to her broken words, for one fateful minute good and evil had their last battle. He heard her words and knew that Estelle, from the fullness of her hate, had lied to Stephana—had tortured her and destroyed her happiness, in order to have revenge on the man who had not loved her. A furious gust of anger against his ally shook him because of the suffering she had caused the woman he loved. Then the tentacles of lust and hatred, which for years had been twining themselves about his soul, regained their grip. A



triumph of all that was most ignoble in him swept away the last appeal of generous manhood.

"Yes, I will help you," he answered hoarsely. "You have endured what no woman could endure—what *you*, least of all, should have been subjected to. Wait here. I will bring a car to the little side gate. Yes, there is a train. I will take you to it."

In the mastery of evil in the Marquis de Tournelles, even the sincerity of his love for Stephana, which in a measure had ennobled it, perished. The light of cunning replaced in his eyes the mad but honest light of desire.

When he was gone, Stephana sat staring before her as in a trance. After years of blank white moonlight and shimmering ocean, with the little waves forever fretfully breaking against the rocks, Ferdinand was again at her side.

She looked up at him with wide open, lusterless eyes.

"All is ready," he said tensely.

"What?" she asked stupidly.

"Come!" he said fiercely.

She roused herself and rose unsteadily to her feet.

Ferdinand took her arm and led her swiftly to the gate. A car, its motor vibrating, stood there. He helped her in, sprang in beside her and they rode away into the white night.

### XXXI

WITH a bewitching woman hanging on one's arm and on one's words, in a garden doing its prettiest to please the select, with balls of colored light glowing amid the trees and throwing their soft beams upon well-gowned women and well-groomed men, and with pleasing strains of music delighting the ears, what man would not believe in the good auspices of his star? The Austrian curled the ends of his mustache upward and was content. The Countess de Maurienvall naturally—almost automatically—convinced any man in whose company she was that he was more interesting to her than other men.

The Austrian's equanimity lasted until they met Roland.

"Oh, there is my cousin! I have something I must say to him. You will forgive me for deserting you, will you not?" The Countess spoke with an upward appealing glance—quite automatic.

With the privilege of cousinship Estelle thrust her arm through Roland's and drew him away from the discomfited Austrian.

"You are to come with me," she said with pretty imperiousness, "and tell me how my sister Germaine is. You went to see her this morning, didn't you? Is she well? Does she seem much broken up over the death of her husband?"

"I am surprised your sisterly anxiety did not lead you to call on her yourself," Roland replied drily. This newborn interest in her sister did not ring quite true to him.

"Now, don't be preachy, Roland," Estelle said with a pout. "I *was* very near seeing her, if you must know. If I hadn't had something more important on hand— Her son is a fine little fellow, isn't he? Tell me, does he resemble the De Longtours at all?"

For three-quarters of an hour the two remained together. Estelle spoke simply and earnestly about Germaine and her affairs. Ought not the rest of the family to do something for her—she had not much money—or at least see to it that her little fortune was invested to the best advantage? She appealed naturally to Roland as the head of the family and the most responsible of her relatives. It was a new side to the character of the brilliant Countess, and the Duke stayed.

After the music began for the dancing on the lawn, Prince Dionosoff approached, peering about in the uncertain light.

"Ah, it is you!" he exclaimed on recognizing them. "I am just looking for the Duchesse de Longtour. Do you know where she is? I am so short-sighted. She promised me a dance."

"My dear Prince, you expect us ladies to remember all the things we prom-

ise?" Estelle cried. "Our husbands could tell you better than that—eh, Roland?"

The Duke resented the tone of his cousin's remark. There was malice in it which hinted at more than the words conveyed.

"I believe you will learn that the Duchesse has not forgotten your dance, Dionosoff, when you find her," he said stiffly.

"She was with De Tournelles," the Prince continued, "but I saw him go out of the garden alone a few minutes ago. I went after him to ask him where he had left her, but he was too quick for me. Your chauffeur, madame, told me that he had taken your car and gone away."

Estelle's eyes glittered. She drew a long breath. "It is a heavenly night for a drive—with the right person," she said.

"Yes, but the Marquis went away alone."

"Poor Ferdinand!" Estelle cried mockingly. "Fancy his wasting all this moonlight on himself!"

Prince Dionosoff was a literal person. "Perhaps he wished for solitude," he suggested.

"Perhaps he did. Come, then, let us try to find the lovely Duchesse ourselves," she exclaimed gaily. "'First catch your hare'—is that not an English proverb?"

She moved away by the side of the Prince, with a backward glance at Roland. On her dark, pretty face was an expression of almost impudent satisfaction. At ten steps' distance she stopped.

"Wait!" she said to her escort. She ran to Roland, laid her hand on his arm and looked straight into his eyes.

"I don't think you will find Stephana tonight—and I don't care a fig about Germaine's income."

A smile was on her lips, but the words came from between clenched teeth. Smiling still, she tripped back to the Russian.

The Duke knew his cousin to be one of those malicious persons who pride themselves on being good haters, on

silently cherishing a grudge until the opportunity comes to satisfy it with interest accrued and compounded. And he was convinced that she would not at random speak as she had just spoken. When she permitted herself the luxury of showing her hatred it was because her revenge was accomplished and she had nothing further to gain by dissimulation.

Estelle had resented Roland's refusal of her love with the bitterness of a vain nature mortified in its vanity; but Roland, not being himself a vain man, supposed she had long ago forgotten, since she had always taken pains to be friendly toward him.

Now a cold misgiving seized him. There was only one way in which she could hurt him—through Stephana.

The Countess de Maurienvail, chatting with Prince Dionosoff and pretending to hunt for Stephana, covertly watched Roland as he made his way toward the entrance of the garden with a purposeful manner; and she bit her lip with vexation, wondering whether through her premature triumph, she had enabled him to thwart her.

Outside, although the Duke knew that Casimir had not yet returned from a trip to San Sebastian, he casually inquired of a man, whom he recognized as the Countess de Maurienvail's chauffeur, whether the Marquis de Tournelles had gone off with his brother.

The man answered that he had gone alone.

It was what the Duke wished to have verified, though he had not dared to ask. Swiftly, yet without an appearance of haste, he walked around the outside of the garden to see if there were another entrance to it. He turned the corner and came upon a little gate. It stood ajar. A patch of white on the ground attracted his attention. He stooped and picked up a lady's handkerchief. In the moonlight he saw the "S" embroidered in one corner.

She was gone. Then it was true. She had left him for Ferdinand de Tournelles. The warning his mother once had given him flashed through his

mind, and his own confident assertion that he could protect his wife. Fool that he had been! He had thought his mere presence sufficient to keep the wolves away!

In some way, by some trick, they had cozened her, had managed to lure her away from him. A white hot rage against those who had brought this calamity upon his wife seemed as if it would deprive him of his reason. Then he crushed it back and tried to think what there was for him to do to repair the evil that had been done. It was characteristic of the man that he did not even now credit Stephana with deliberate desertion of him. Much as there was in her which puzzled him, he knew her sufficiently well not to believe—even with the damning handkerchief in his hand—that she was capable of a vulgar intrigue.

He forced himself to reason that possibly she had been taken suddenly ill and had returned to the hotel. He retraced his steps and leisurely got into his motor car.

"Take me back to the Hotel du Grand Océan," he said to his chauffeur. Once during the drive he leaned forward and touched the man on the arm. "Faster!" he said.

Coolly he sauntered through the lobby to their suite of rooms. The maid was there. At sight of her he hoped with a tremendous feeling of relief that his surmise had been correct.

"Has your mistress returned?" he asked cheerfully.

"No, monsieur. Is anything the matter?" she asked fearfully.

"Why should anything be the matter?" he parried, to recover from the shock at the death of his hope. The muscles in his cheeks hardened. "Listen! Say no word to anyone. Don't cry! I am going out to bring back your mistress, and I wish you to be ready to take care of her when she returns."

The Duke went out of the hotel again, to all appearances the nonchalant man of the world on pleasure bent. On the steps he halted and lighted a cigarette, to give himself time to plan. In spite

of his confident words, he was at a complete loss how to proceed. Biarritz was a sufficiently large place to hunt for a woman whose name he might not even mention.

Estelle! If he could see her for a few minutes alone he would get the secret from her if he had to wring her neck to do it. But she was safe at the Marquesa's. To speak to her there would merely give her the opportunity to spread scandal abroad, which above all else he wished to avoid.

Casimir! He might know something of his brother's habits which would be of use in tracking him. Perhaps he had returned by this time.

The Duke sprang into his car and told the man to hurry to the Hotel du Petit Roi.

"No," the polite clerk regretted, five minutes later, "Monsieur le Comte has not yet returned from San Sebastian."

Roland turned away to hide the blank despair that was overmastering him. Outside a motor was approaching rapidly, and Casimir drew up to the curb in his runabout.

## XXXII

FERDINAND drove cautiously at first, disguising speed with skill, then faster as the town fell away behind them and a moon-silvered ribbon of road stretched out in front.

Faster yet they sped, the car swaying and leaping. At a dangerous curve he escaped by inches another motor coming from the opposite direction. The Marquis's nerves did not flutter at the nearness to accident. His star was in the ascendant tonight, and he could not be harmed. He did not even look back. Had he done so he would have seen that the other car had stopped and that its occupant was standing up and looking after him.

Stephana at first noticed nothing of the direction in which Ferdinand was taking her. The speed of their tearing through the air soothed rather than alarmed her. When she became conscious of the silent countryside, De

Tournelles reassured her by saying that he was taking her to the next station to Biarritz, as safer.

Ferdinand drove that night as if possessed. The dark line of mountains loomed nearer and nearer. In their foothills nestled his hunting lodge. He drew a cloak around Stephana's shoulders. Other than for this he did not slacken speed until he turned in at his gate and pulled up in front of his door.

"Is this the station?" Stephana asked, half rousing herself.

"No, that is a little farther on. The train is not due yet. It will be better if we wait here until it is time to take it."

His voice trembled. He sprang from the car and held out his hand to help her.

With instinctive reluctance Stephana descended from her seat and entered the door he opened for her. He struck a match and lighted a candle here and there, and touched the bundle of fagots on the hearth.

No servant appeared, yet everything was in order—in readiness one might have thought. There was none of the roughness or untidiness that would have been quite excusable in a man's hunting lodge. In one corner was a small table set for two. Upon the walls hung trophies of the chase, and guns, pistols and other weapons in spotless condition, arranged with the eye of an artist.

A sportsman of the Anglo-Saxon breed would have laughed at hanging up good guns for their decorative value; would have laughed at the dainty ordering of the whole place; but Ferdinand hunted more than one kind of game, and his pains were not wasted when he was pursuing the noblest of his quarries. He was no amateur Lothario.

Mechanically Stephana moved toward the fire and held out her cold fingers to its warmth. With subtle misgiving her glance flickered about the high-ceilinged hall and over the decorated walls. The daintiness of the room was hardly suited to a place

whence man might arise and kill, according to his primal instincts, and to which he might return, tired and weather-worn, for rest with pipe and glass when sated with slaughter. The exquisiteness around her hinted at other conquests than those which leave their horns and heads behind.

She gave a long, shivering sigh, like a child about to awaken from sleep.

De Tournelles was conscious of Stephana's every motion, while he busied himself with her comfort. Here was higher game and shyer game than he had ever bagged before. Often the nets might safely be laid before the eyes of the bird to be enmeshed. Stephana was in his power—but she was not yet his.

He placed a chair by the fire and made her sit down. Deftly he lighted more candles in various parts of the room till a soft, cozy light filled it, and held the match to the alcohol lamp on the supper table. All the time Stephana's brain was becoming more and more active, and she tried to reason herself out of the vague alarm which crept over her. Nervously she spoke to him once or twice, for, above all, she must not let him see that she was afraid of the loneliness of the place, afraid of the hour, and especially afraid of him. Surely, she told herself once and again—with her American traditions about men—no gentleman would do harm to a woman.

Ferdinand lifted the little table and brought it to where Stephana sat.

She jumped up. "Oh, Ferdinand, I am sorry you took all this trouble for me! It must be time to go now."

"Not quite yet," he answered, his voice sounding strange; "and you must let me make you comfortable while you stay. My hunting lodge has never been honored by so fair a visitor before."

Stephana resumed her seat. Her manner became more animated, and she affected to treat this as a little adventure. Though it nearly choked her, she ate of the food he gave her. Once or twice she could not prevent a nervous shiver from running over her.

Was there present the ghost of the honor of other women to warn the young Duchess?

Ferdinand saw the shiver and turned higher the flame of the alcohol lamp, while he mixed the ingredients of a stimulating drink. He himself touched almost nothing.

"Drink this."

He kneeled in front of Stephana and held the steaming glass to her lips. He could hardly breathe. Emotion was suffocating him at her lovely nearness. Here was the hunting that entranced his soul. Tonight she enraptured him ten times as much as ever. The blood throbbed in his temples. The ecstasy of desire was upon him.

Stephana drank and gave him back the half-emptied glass. He kissed the spot her lips had touched, smiling up into her eyes, and drank the rest. He meant to go very slowly lest he frighten her. But her nearness enthralled him. He bent and took one of her slender hands and brought it to his lips, and with the touch of her flesh the senses which had always been his master when aroused dominated him, and the cunning of his mind took its retreat to slumber until such time as his satisfied senses should give it permission to return.

With a crash he sent the glass he was holding into the fireplace, and throwing his arms around Stephana spoke to her in broken sentences of love, as men like De Tournelles understand it when their passion rules.

Stephana's fear, although at its climax, did not paralyze her. On the contrary, her mind was extraordinarily alert.

Clasping her fingers firmly about his hands, she unwound his arms from her waist, saying gently:

"Ferdinand, in my great need I turned to you as a friend I could trust. You are not going to make me regret my trust in you?"

"But I love you, Stephana—I adore you!" the Marquis cried, as if this supreme fact outweighed all else.

"You are adding to my unhappiness, my friend, by speaking thus."

"Ah, I will make you forget your unhappiness. I will teach you the divine pleasure of love, as you have never known it—as I alone can teach it."

He attempted again to clasp her in his arms, but the indignation which she had been suppressing mastered her, and she repulsed him so violently that from his precarious balance he was sent sprawling on the floor.

He scrambled to his feet. Stephana was at the far end of the room, breathless, a wild fear dilating her dark eyes, though even yet she could not believe herself unable to dominate him by her wishes. But, as he sprang toward her, mortification and lust stamped on his features, she was deceived no longer, and snatching a dagger from the wall she cried:

"If you touch me I'll kill you!"

The man stopped. The lithe girl with the gleaming dagger in her hand and the desperate light in her eyes, her bare shoulders and arms whiter than her white dress against the dark red background of the wall, made a picture an artist would have raved over. And the artist in Ferdinand's complex nature, even amid the tumult of his emotions, was roused.

"*Mon Dieu*, you look stunning!" he exclaimed.

He feasted his eyes on her, while the red of shame slowly mounted to Stephana's brow. Then he turned carelessly away, and as her vigilance relaxed, with a sudden, swift blow he struck the dagger to the floor.

Catching both her hands in his, he dragged her struggling to the center of the room.

"Aha, my pretty one, you forgot that you had an old fencer to reckon with!"

"Ferdinand!" Stephana implored. "Let me go and you will always remember that you have been merciful to a woman."

"But," he protested indignantly, "do you think I have schemed and waited all these months for nothing?"

"Ah! Then you deliberately trapped me?" Stephana cried, trying to free her wrists from his hands.

"Yes, I trapped you, and I would do it again," he exulted. "I love you! I love you! Stephana, you do not yet know what love is! It is worth committing any crime for!"

She writhed, powerless, in his grasp. "If you keep me here tonight I shall kill myself!" she said.

He laughed. "Oh, I've heard all that before; and you will weep oceans of tears, and bewail the day you ever met me—but usually this comes afterward."

From the agony of her soul Stephana made a last attempt to move his better nature.

"Ferdinand, you have me at your mercy. I appeal to your generosity—to your chivalry—to your manhood to let me go."

De Tournelles laughed again, a merciless, wicked laugh.

But Stephana was no longer listening. Limply her arms relaxed, and she stared past him, transfixed.

Instinctively De Tournelles glanced over his shoulder. In the doorway stood the Duke de Longtour.

"You were appealing, Stephana, to qualities the Marquis discarded long ago," the Duke said.

He stepped into the room, and the two cousins glared at each other with the steely look of men whose hatred is deeper than words. Yet, when Roland spoke again, his voice was cold.

"You took the Duchesse for a stroll. Now we will return to the Marquesa's. Prince Dionosoff is waiting for his dance."

### XXXIII

ROLAND and Stephana entered the gardens by the side gate. Ferdinand returned Estelle's car whence he had taken it, and came in through the main entrance—alone, as he had gone out. During his solitary drive to town his hatred of Roland had been mounting within him until he was nearly consumed by it. He ground his teeth at the thought of his ill luck. His revenge had been in his hands, only to be wrenched from him at the last mo-

ment. Every sense, every faculty of his was merged into hatred of his cousin; and he looked forward to the inevitable encounter with him with fierce, unholy joy.

As soon as he was again within the Marquesa's gardens, his bold glance darted everywhere in search of the De Longtours. So far from wishing to avoid the man and woman he had tried to wrong, he no sooner caught sight of them standing with the Marquesa and a group of people watching the dancing than he walked up to them.

"You are thinking of dancing at last?" he said to Stephana, seizing the opportunity for insolence.

It was the Duke who replied.

"Over there is Prince Dionosoff. Will you tell him that the Duchesse is ready to dance with him now?"

The tables were turned, and there was nothing for the Marquis to do except obey. After all, he was outwardly a gentleman.

A few minutes later Stephana was dancing with the Prince; and Roland moved away among the guests until he found Dr. Bartholemy. He drew him to one side and spoke with him for some time. Afterward he returned to the dancing, and stood watching the scene before him in placid contemplation, as if he found the greatest satisfaction in attendance on social functions.

Toward the end of the evening Casimir came to Ferdinand. "After Roland has taken the Duchesse to her hotel he will meet us at your hunting lodge. He will bring a surgeon. I will take you up in my runabout."

Ferdinand nodded without a word.

When Stephana's dance with Prince Dionosoff was over the Duke said to her quietly, "Come."

They bade adieu to the Marquesa and were making their way to the entrance when they came face to face with Estelle de Maurienvall. She stared at them. The Duke smiled. Stephana nodded.

Upon reaching their suite in the hotel Stephana passed on into her sitting



room, where her husband followed her.

"I am going out again for a while," he said slowly, "and I want you to give me your word that you will do nothing—absolutely nothing—till I see you again."

"Yes."

"Thank you."

The candles were guttering in their sockets when Ferdinand and Casimir reached the lodge. The fire was cold and gray in the fireplace. The festive little supper table looked untidily incongruous. On the hearth glittered bits of broken glass, and the stale scent of the punch was in the air.

Roland and Dr. Bartholemy arrived a few minutes later. The latter was an expert motorist, and Roland knew the way as if it had been burned into his brain.

The Duke walked up to his cousin.

"I used to do you the compliment of believing that the women whose lives you ruined came to you because they loved you. I did not know that you plotted with a pandering woman to entrap them."

The Marquis de Tournelles shrugged his shoulders. "You discovered your wife having supper with me here alone. I am ready to give you the reparation one gentleman can offer another for such an unfortunate discovery."

"In some way that I do not yet know, you and Estelle made my wife come here. I found her appealing to your manhood to let her go, and you were laughing at her."

The Duke's face, for all his attempt at self-control, was not pleasant to look upon just then. There was the agony in it for what his wife had suffered that transcended anything a man can feel for himself.

To Ferdinand it was as wine to the drunkard. He laughed aloud.

"I made love to your wife—and she came with me. What would you expect? She bought you—and regretted the bargain. Someone had to console her."

The Duke stood with his head thrust

forward between his shoulders, and when he spoke it was chokingly.

"We fight tonight. We cannot both be alive tomorrow."

Ferdinand felt cold, as if death had passed through the room. Gradually he pulled himself together. He remembered that Roland had never fought a duel, while he himself had often faced the sharpened foils. There had been many men to whom he had owed reparation.

"As you please," he said scornfully.

D'Erouville and Dr. Bartholemy cleared away the necessary space in the middle of the hall, and the duel began.

### XXXIV

IN the first gray light of the morning the Duke entered his sitting room, walking carefully, as if not to awaken someone sleeping. He stumbled over a figure lying prone upon the floor.

"Why, Stephana, is it you?" he cried, his voice full of alarm. He lifted her to her feet.

"Yes, I think I must have been asleep," she answered dully, as if it were the most natural thing in the world to find her on the floor. "Are you hurt?"

"Not even a scratch."

There was a silence, and then Stephana asked: "And now what are you going to do with me?"

"To do with you? I suppose I shall have to put you to bed. You ought to have been there long ago."

Stephana shook her head. "I don't want to go to bed. I want to speak to you. I meant to leave you tonight. I asked Ferdinand to take me to the station, and he took me to his hunting lodge."

"To leave me? But why tonight particularly?"

"Because I was so miserable." She gave the reason simply, as a child might, explaining why it had done something wrong. "Estelle took me out to luncheon today and showed me the woman—the woman you love and your little boy, and I could stand it no longer. I

—I do not think I knew just what I was doing; but I told Ferdinand that I was going to leave you, and—”

“Stephana, stop!” Roland interrupted. “Whom was it Estelle showed you?”

Stephana passed her hand wearily across her forehead. “Oh, you know. The fair-haired woman whom you have always loved, and your little boy, in the villa outside Biarritz. I did not know about the child until this morning. He seemed to make it so much worse—at least, he seemed to give her so much more right to you than I had. Before that I had hoped—”

“Stephana!” He took both her hands in his.

She pulled them away. “No, please don’t. We can arrange everything; only I must not stay with you any more and see you every day. I could not do that. I will go away wherever you want me to—into a convent, if you wish it.”

“But, Stephana, will you please tell me a little more? The morning after we arrived in Touraine—then you had not seen Estelle, and yet that was when it began.”

“Yes, that was the morning when I overheard your mother say that you had had to marry me on account of my money; that you had made this great sacrifice for your sisters, and that—I forget all the things now. It doesn’t matter; only I wish—I wish I had never seen you in New York.”

“Stephana, the woman whom you saw me with this morning was Germaine, Estelle’s sister. She has just lost her husband, and that was their little boy, not mine. Estelle sent me word this morning that Germaine was here and wished to see me. I tried to tell you about her on our way to the Marquesa’s tonight, but you would not listen.”

His wife was staring at Roland with dark eyes that had in them the wild light almost of one demented.

“But the woman whom you have always loved—”

“There never was one, dear, until I went to America. I *did* go there to

marry money; but I could not make up my mind to do it until I saw you that day caught by your automobile veil. I married you, believing that I could make you happy and make you care for me when we should be in Touraine together. But how was I to come to you and say, ‘I love you,’ at the same time that I told your father I should have to have money with you? How could I speak of love to you, knowing that I could not have done so had you been penniless? If you knew how hard it was, Stephana!”

Stephana scarcely seemed to understand him. “Then you—then there is no woman whom you love?”

“As God is my witness there has always been one woman whom I have loved ever since the first day I saw you—and there is no other.”

Miracles were taking place before the wondering eyes of the girl, and her starved heart was unable to take in at once that of which it had been deprived so long.

“Then you love me!” She repeated it over and over. “And all they told—all they hinted to me—was not true? You are not saying this—to punish me afterward by telling me it isn’t so?”

“Stephana—my wife!” He took her in his arms and gazed into her upturned face, so pure, so delicate. He felt a sort of awe at the thought that at last she was his very own. “Dearest, I thought I had suffered—but how I should have suffered could I have guessed what you were going through!”

He drew her to him and with infinite tenderness kissed her—kissed her lips and her eyes and her hair, with the pent up love of many months.

She lay in his arms, faint with happiness. Only the present certitude of his love could repay her for the months of doubt and misery she had gone through.

She opened her eyes and held him a little away from her that she might look at him. She gazed into his gray eyes until he was reminded of that other time when she had gazed thus.

“Do you remember, on board the steamer, when you asked me why I

married you—and my hat blew off?" he asked.

She gave an almost imperceptible nod.

"I did not answer you then; but I married you because I loved you, and now that we know each other—"

"I used to have glimpses of you, Roland," she interrupted, "but I threw them out of my heart, believing them false. Now I shall have to go around and gather them all up again." After another long scrutiny she asked: "You

are now yourself—and you will never again be cold and formal and polite?"

He crushed her to him. "I am your lover, dearest, and I shall never be politer than this," and again his kisses devoured her and quickened in her the blood that had been frozen during the long night.

And from the east the radiant colors of the dawn came gloriously into the room, as they had already come into the life of Stephana Brennan, Duchess de Longtour.



## WHEN A MAID LOVES

By ETHEL CARLISLE

**I** ENVY every maid that sighs  
 To win the love light in his eyes;  
 And every gaze that turns for him,  
 And every heart that burns for him  
 Stirs all that in me lies.

I envy every melody  
 That seeks to turn his thoughts from me;  
 And every song they sing for him,  
 And tinkling bells that ring for him  
 Like bobbing buoys at sea.

I envy every winning wile  
 That strives to hold with subtle guile  
 His love from me. I live for him,  
 And gladly would I give for him  
 My all, to win his smile.

I envy every ruddy glow  
 That cheers him when the sun is low,  
 And gives its warmest beams to him,  
 And sends, perhaps, sweet dreams to him,  
 Because I love him so.



**T**HE social, like the musical, scale begins and ends with "dough."

# MADemoisELLE JOLIE'S HIGH C

By DAVID C. JOHNSTON

“O H-H-H-H-H!”

The note was long, loud, clear, full and smooth. With its sudden brilliant attack and soft, gradual cadence it disturbed fantastically the silence of the night.

“As God lives,” cried Angelo, “the High C of my dreams!”

He rushed into the hall and knocked *staccato agitato* on the landlady's door. She knew that knock of Angelo's.

“I'm going to bed, signor,” she called cruelly. “Good night.”

“One word, most merciful of landladies!” begged Angelo. “See, so as not to wake your blessed and respectable roomers, I fall on my knees and whisper through the keyhole. That High C—that heavenly High C! Whose was it?”

The landlady laughed—most irrelevantly and irreverently, thought Angelo. “Mademoiselle Jolie's,” she answered. “Mademoiselle came here only today. She's contralto soloist at the ten-cent vaudeville.”

“Contralto!” groaned Angelo. “But that High C! Coloratura or nothing!”

“She's trying to raise her voice to a soprano,” explained the landlady. “Wait, Signor Angelo.” She opened the door ever so little and handed him a photograph. “Mademoiselle's in costume,” with another laugh. “Good night. Feast on her beauty in your dreams.”

“Most charming of landladies,” cried Angelo, “I kiss your—you withdraw your hand? Then I kiss this blessed keyhole—and this thrice blessed picture! Signora, good night.” And Angelo hurried back to his room.

For a long time he sat in darkness,

trembling with eagerness, hope, despair. Then he dared to light the lamp. But even then he dared not look at the picture. What if that divine High C came from a throat not shapely and swanlike? What if Mademoiselle had a bad nose, frizzy hair, a set and implacable mouth? Surely the gods . . .

“Jolie!” murmured Angelo tenderly. “With such a name she *must* be beautiful!” So he turned up the light and looked at the photograph. “Thou *art* beautiful, little one—almost as beautiful as thy supernal High C! Thy hair—it must be Titian! Thy skin—it must be as white as the moon! Thy little nose—no, it is not too *retroussé*! Thy little mouth—no, it is not too big!”

He rose tremulously and drew the frayed tapestry across the one window. “No one must see us, little one—and no one must hear what we say.” He went to the door and stuffed his handkerchief into the keyhole, then returned to the picture, which he clasped with eager fingers. “Little one, I introduce myself to you. I am only Angelo—but I had the bliss of being born in Milan, the musical, the divine. I have been in this terrifying America long years trying to teach the art of singing, trying to build voices where there are none, trying to create High C's half as round and full as yours. Alas, the unkind horror of it all!” He hurried to the door, took his handkerchief from the keyhole, wiped the tears from his eyes, then stuffed it into the keyhole again.

“Most exquisite of demoiselles!” he exclaimed, returning and pressing the picture to his breast. “I am poor

—frightfully! I am old—dreadfully! I am ugly—unspeakably! But I cherish a superb ambition! Listen, little one. Almost one year ago I gave up teaching—forever. I had saved a little money on which I planned to live one year—one year to the day, the hour, the minute. In this year I was to write the Great Opera. The theme had haunted me for a quarter of a century. It had dogged, deafened, blinded, choked, stifled me, demanding my life, my soul, until I had to surrender myself to it unreservedly. The Great Opera had to be written. It had to write itself—through me. But, alas! where should I find the Voice? I began the awful search. I went to operas, musical comedies, churches, concerts, summer gardens, even to bad, very bad places where *café-chanteuses* sing sinuously! The days, the weeks, the months slipped by—and I found it not. I hunted for it everywhere—in the street, in poverty's holes, in unnamable places. In vain! So to-night, with but one week of my year left, I had given up hope, when I heard your heavenly High C, little one—and oh, the burden it lifted from my soul! In this one little week I shall write the Great Opera—but you must not fail me! For at the year's beginning I vowed that if at its end I had not written the Opera and found the Voice I should die. See, here is the pistol, loaded—here beside you on the table—Hush! Your High C again?" He listened. "No, only my imagination. Well, I kiss your lily hand, anyway—ah, you have no hand? Your cherry lips, you say? No, no, I am not worthy. Just the hem of your garment—ah, but I see you haven't any on! See, as a compromise, I kiss the name of the photographer! Thrice happy man to have posed you!"

Angelo placed Mademoiselle Jolie upon his little old wabby piano, draped a wreath of withered autumn leaves around her, blew out the light, drew back the window curtain, then in a moonbeam sat down to compose. The Muses must have been waiting roundabout, for in a moment he was

playing softly. The inspiration fairly flowed. Angelo was in heaven. That greatest of joys, the joy of artistic creation, was his. He played a long time—until the moon went down. Then by the yellow lamplight he wrote down what he had played.

All night he was in this surpassing frenzy bestowed of the gods. At dawn he snatched an hour's sleep. At seven o'clock he crept down the squeaky stairs like a thief with the booty in his clothes and went to the lunch counter in the next block for his morning coffee. On his way home he stopped at an optician's and bought a pair of enormous black goggles, which he put on at once. The landlady was on the doorstep when he returned.

"Why, signor," she exclaimed, "what's the matter with your eyes? Inflammation?"

"Yes," answered Angelo, hurrying by her up the stairs.

"But, signor," she called banteringly, "how about Mademoiselle Jolie's picture? Isn't she just too stunning!"

"Signora," begged Angelo, "please don't. We must not take Mademoiselle Jolie's hallowed name in vain. The—it—it is too sacred, dearest of signoras." And poor Angelo, with the goggles on, stumbled in this unwonted darkness as he tried to hurry on upstairs.

"Signor," cried the merciless landlady, "Mademoiselle Jolie is at home to her friends every night after the show. Third door to the left from yours." And she burst into a peal of laughter.

Poor, hounded, goggled Angelo stumbled on down the hall into his own room. He then locked the door and sank upon a chair, weeping bitterly.

"Little one," he murmured, "I bought these hideous black goggles for your sake. I was afraid I might meet you in the hall—and in the pitiless daylight you might not look as beautiful as your picture. I am even afraid to look at your picture now for fear it may not seem as beautiful to me as it did last night. And oh, little one, that would kill me!" He took off the

goggles while he dried his tears, then was racked with a new fear. "What if I should hear your incomparable High C again—and what if it were false, broken, twangy, sharp, flat, cracked? Good God, what would become of the Great Opera—of me?" He fell upon his knees before the picture. "Most merciful of demoiselles, do not sing another note, I beg of you, until the opera is finished. Then—oh, then—he soloist for the Heavenly Chorus! In the meantime let me provide against possible accidents." He rose, hunted through his dresser drawers and at last found a wad of cotton, which he stuffed into his ears. If Mademoiselle Jolie was amazed by this fantastic performance, her splendidly null face did not show it.

Thus protected against any stray machinations of fate, Angelo began the second day of the Great Week. He drew the mocking tapestry across the window, making the room as dark as possible, then sat down at the reluctant little piano, which, under stress of the composer's grand passion, had a new wobble, a new shudder, a new tinpannyness. But Angelo was not listening to the piano. He was listening to the angels.

For two days and a night he slept but little and ate nothing; the divine fire needs no replenishing! The happiness that the years had denied him was his at last to measureless extent. Like Israfel's, his heart strings were a lute; and the Cosmos itself was busy playing upon him!

The second night he felt a quite earthly faintness within him. "I am not hungry, little one," he said to Mademoiselle Jolie; "it is simply my stomach."

But the call of his stomach was insistent, so he put on his hat—and his goggles—and ventured into the hall. The light of the smoky hall lamp was so dim, however, that he feared he might fall all the way downstairs, so he took off the goggles and then crept down noiselessly a step at a time. He got out of the house without meeting Mademoiselle Jolie, without even meeting

the landlady, for which he thanked God with gusto.

With some beef broth and crackers inside him he returned to the house; and now it was that his good angel deserted him. He was halfway up the stairs when a strange young man ran up behind him, pushed him against the wall, laughed boisterously, and then—crowning infamy!—disappeared in Mademoiselle Jolie's room!

How he reached his own room outraged Angelo never knew—but in a moment he was pointing his loaded pistol first at his own head, then at Mademoiselle Jolie's picture, then at the piano, then at the score of the unfinished opera. But a glorious inspiration seized him just in time.

"Her brother," he cried, falling on his knees and weeping for joy. "Her poor, long lost brother! Most chaste and noble of demoiselles, can you ever forgive me?"

Early the next morning there was a knock on Angelo's door. He knew the landlady's peremptory tap, so, shivering with terror, did not answer. But the landlady knew Angelo, too. She threw a little card through the transom—and then laughed that jarring laugh of hers.

"A ticket to the vaudeville tonight, signor," she called. "Mademoiselle Jolie, who is much interested in you, wants you to hear her new song."

Angelo sat motionless. With horror-struck eyes he gazed at the ticket on the floor. It was red. It seemed to burn. It seemed to burn into him. Vaudeville! A ten-cent show! Instinctively he put on his goggles and stuffed his ears with cotton. Go? Never!

But wait! What was that? Mademoiselle Jolie's High C! Once more it rang out, as on that first night, clear and loud and sweet. Angelo tore the cotton from his ears and the goggles from his eyes, then snatched Mademoiselle Jolie's picture from the astonished piano and covered it with kisses.

At half past seven that night, in the remains of an ancient dress suit, he was ready to start for the vaudeville. The cotton and the goggles were in his pock-



et for emergency's sake. With magnificent courage he opened his door—when a ribald song in men's voices arrested his attention in spite of himself. He had to look. He had to listen. And he saw the men. He heard the song. For Mademoiselle Jolie's door was open.

At first he thought he must faint. Then he grew indignant, furious. Like Vandals in imperial Rome, like defilers in a holy temple, these drunken singers were profaning Mademoiselle Jolie's room in her absence. He must smite them in their revelry. He must go and drive them out.

He had taken only the first step when once more that peerless note rang out loud and clear and strong—Mademoiselle Jolie's High C! She was there, then. She was with them. She was inspiring their song.

He managed to get back into his room, then collapsed in a limp little heap on the floor. Men . . . drunken men . . . singers of ribald songs . . . in Mademoiselle Jolie's room . . . odd, rather . . . But that High C—that heavenly High C . . . On the seventh day the Lord rested from his labors. On the fifth night Angelo slept and rested from his.

He awoke late the next morning. The most golden of sunbeams lay across him, but, alas! the landlady's strident voice was calling him through the transom.

"Signor Angelo!"

"Yes?"

"Mademoiselle Jolie was terribly cut up because you weren't at the vaudeville last night. She leaves for a swing around the circuit the end of the week and wants to see you before she goes."

"Thank you, signora. Good-bye."

And then it all came back to him with sickening suddenness—the men, the song, Mademoiselle Jolie's unabashed and unashamed High C. In a cold sweat he staggered to his feet, took his pistol, aimed it at his head, at Mademoiselle Jolie's picture, at the piano, at the score of the unfinished opera—and then, just in time, an inspiration seized him.

"It was only a dream!" he cried triumphantly. "I dreamed it!"

He went to the beloved photograph on the piano and clasped his hands before it. "Forgive me, little one," he whispered. "Nightmares are no respecters of persons. And so you want to see me—poor old Angelo? You shall, little one, you shall—tomorrow night, at the end of my week, the end of my year."

All that day he worked feverishly, unremittingly. That night the compassionate gods pressed down his eyelids and made him sleep. In the morning he dared write a little note to Mademoiselle Jolie stating that he should do himself the honor of calling on her that night after the theater. More singular still, he dared tiptoe down the hall and slip it under her door.

That evening with the ending of Angelo's year came the finishing of Angelo's opera. The wretched little piano was glad. So was Angelo's scratchy pen. So must have been the overworked Muses.

In the remains of his ancient dress suit Angelo, primed, pruned and primed, waxed, polished and perfumed, sat waiting. He was dreadfully excited. He was hot and cold by turns. And his pulse made funny little crescendos and diminuendos. But he was game, was Angelo.

As the clock struck eleven he heard footsteps on the stairs—a regiment of them. Ah, Mary in Heaven! How many Mademoiselle Jolies were there? Besides, these footsteps were heavy, shambling, brutal, masculine—anything but the pitapats Mademoiselle's should have been! Angelo waited an eternity, then with a glacier around his heart and a mountain in his throat he went out into the hall. He would go to Mademoiselle Jolie's room even if a dozen of her brothers were with her, even—ah, shame, shame!—if a dozen of her lovers were with her!

Yes, there was the light under her door. In a daze, a maze, somehow, he moved toward it, reached it. With one hand he clutched the score of his opera,

with the other his pistol—if death were to be his portion; if she did not like his opera, he would die at her feet, would Angelo.

He knocked on the door. Somebody shouted, "Come in!" But Angelo could not turn the knob; his hands were full, as was his heart. The door was thrown open; then—

"Who are you?"

"You're interrupting the rehearsal!"

"Turn that gun the other way!"

Angelo's superb old heart—a love lyre, if ever there was one—made its final cadence, its ultimate diminuendo. He tottered on the threshold. His failing and fevered eyes saw a thousand men seated and standing about the room, a hundred men at the little old piano, five thousand Mademoiselle Jolies standing ready to sing.

Oddly enough, these five thou-

sand Mademoiselle Jolies shrank, fell away, faded, concentrated into one Mademoiselle Jolie, a divinely beautiful Mademoiselle Jolie, who came toward him with outstretched hand and glorious smile.

"You're Signor Angelo," she said. "I'm very glad to see you."

Angelo's eager lips tried to thank her, but his heart was singing its own dirge. He managed to hand her the opera. Then the pistol dropped from his other hand to the floor. Then Angelo, like a withered leaf that in its time has been green, sank to the floor also. It seemed that his lips moved even after his heart had ceased its song—for Mademoiselle Jolie, bending over him, fancied she heard something about a "heavenly High C."

Whether the High C were heavenly or not, certainly Angelo's smile was!



## THE BRIDGE OF YEARS

By FRANK M. BICKNELL

WHEN I was six and she was four, the midge,  
We used to play about the old red bridge  
And often dig in sand for half the day;  
'Twas then we "made it spades," as one might say.

We quarreled fiercely once, as I recall:  
She said a word—'twas not polite at all;  
She said it thrice to make her meaning clear,  
We came to blows, we "made it clubs," I fear.

Long afterward we played at bridge—I lost,  
Lost all, yet played on, reckless of the cost;  
Then asked her, with the courage of despair,  
"A diamond may I make it—solitaire?"

She said a word; she said it very low  
And only once; it didn't sound like "No."  
I was—and am—the happiest of men,  
For we have always "made it hearts" since then.

# SUTTEE

By NEITH BOYCE

THE doctor was answering a hurry call. His motor, however, was constantly checked in the stream of carriages on Fifth Avenue, and his impatience betrayed itself in the tenseness of his attitude and of his smooth, sharply cut face. The house to which he was going stood in a side street near the Park, a few doors from the Avenue. He jumped out before the motor had stopped, and the door was opened for him before he reached it. The butler had a pale and terrified face.

"Glad you've come, sir," he gasped. "We didn't know what to do. Mr. Lindsay's on an awful tear. He won't let nobody near him. Look at that, sir!"

The tiled floor of the hall was wet, and a stream of water was running down through the balustrade of the stairway from the floor above.

"What's that for? Guess you need a plumber, not a doctor," snapped Graves, as the man took his hat and fur coat.

"Lord, sir, it's Mr. Lindsay. He's been pouring water down the stairs this half-hour. He won't let none of us go up or down."

"Where's Mrs. Lindsay?"

"I think she's in the library. I haven't seen her since he commenced this. She was talking to him before—"

Graves started up the stairs, and the man called after him quaveringly:

"Look out for yourself, Doctor! Shall I telephone for a policeman? I didn't like to do it on my own—"

"No. Just stay below there," Graves called back sharply.

He ran up the short flight of stairs and started up the second flight lead-

ing to the bedrooms, but was met by a fresh deluge of water which struck him fair on one shoulder and for a moment blinded him.

"Stop that!" he shouted.

"Eh, stop what?" returned a husky voice from above. "Get out of my bath tub, will you?"

Graves cleared his eyes and saw a figure in pink pajamas, with a large pitcher in one hand, standing, feet wide apart, at the head of the stairs.

"Don't you come up here," growled the master of the house, brandishing the empty pitcher. "It's damned queer if a man can't take a bath without the whole neighborhood coming in."

"Look here! I'm coming up," said the doctor. "I'm Graves; don't you know me? And I'm in a hurry. You've wet me through to the skin with your infernal foolishness, and I've got to come up and get dry. Do you want me to have pneumonia?"

"Don't care if you do. You ought to know better than to get into my bath. You can't come up here. Pity if a man can't have his own dressing room to himself, in his own house."

"Do you dress on the stairs? How in thunder do you expect to take a bath on the landing?"

Graves went up, stair by stair, toward the big pink figure, whose congested face and half-opened gray eyes lowered down at him. The big man stood like a bull, head down, breathing heavily.

"Bath!" he stammered. "I've poured water enough down there for a dozen baths. If that fool of a man hadn't left the stopper out— Look out!"

And as Graves approached within arm's length he aimed a furious blow with the pitcher.

Graves dodged and threw himself upon the big man, knocking the pitcher from his hand and seizing both his wrists. Lindsay staggered back against the wall, then forced Graves over against the balustrade of the stairs in a frantic effort to free himself. Graves shouted for Parker, the butler, tripped Lindsay and threw himself forward on his chest. Both men went to the floor. Lindsay's head struck against the parquet floor and he lay quiet.

The butler and two women servants came running. The doctor got to his feet and looked down on the insensible man, his face set and hard, breathing fast from the encounter.

"Come, get him into his own room," he said curtly.

The four carried Lindsay in and laid him on a carved walnut bed, facing a great Bouguereau "Madonna" that smiled in sickly sweetness from the red wall. The doctor touched his head, laid a finger on his wrist, and then, after hastily drying as well as he could his own drenched coat, left the room, saying:

"One of you stay here, and when he comes to himself let me know."

He ran downstairs to the telephone and called up a private hospital.

"Is Miss Schmidt there? Tell her Dr. Graves . . . Miss Schmidt, I want two special nurses here in half an hour. D. T. case. Have you got two good ones? . . . Miss Parsons? That's good—and another. I'll send my motor. Have 'em ready, please. Good-bye."

He scribbled on a leaf of his notebook the address of the hospital and gave it to the butler.

"Give that to my chauffeur and tell him to make the best time he can," he said, and turned brusquely away as Parker began a question.

"Don't bother me now—I'll talk to you later," he added over his shoulder.

He went slowly up the first flight of stairs, passing a housemaid, who had begun to mop up the water, and at the top of the stairs he paused. No sound

from the floor above. Before him, along the passage, was the library door, closed. No sound from there. While he hesitated an instant, a door behind him opened, and a trim young woman came out, closing it behind her. She was English, blonde, pretty, and rather coquettish—the governess.

"Oh, Doctor, have you quieted him? What a scene today! The poor children—I couldn't help their hearing something! Is he hurt? And you—I hope *you* are not!"

She bent toward him, her blue eyes shining.

"No damage done," said Graves shortly. "Better take the children out now for an hour. It's all right."

He nodded and walked away from her toward the library door. She stood and watched him. He knocked, and, as there was no response, went in and shut the door again softly.

The room was almost dark; the wood fire had died down, and the windows rather shut out the gray light of late afternoon with their pale saffron curtains. Graves made out the figure of a woman at a desk at the end of the room, lying forward, her arms thrown out and her head down. He spoke hesitatingly:

"Mrs. Lindsay—"

She did not move, and he went nearer. He saw that the loose sleeves of her dress half covered her head. She had not heard him come in.

"Mrs. Lindsay!"

His voice was sharp with distress. She stirred and said dully:

"What is it?"

"It's I—Graves. Are you ill?"

He turned on the electric light on the desk. She lifted her head and sat up, moving as though in pain, showing a delicate face, deadly pale, and dark hair in disorder. Her light blue eyes looked up at him with a stunned and tragic expression.

"I didn't know—you were here. I told them to telephone—"

"I came as soon as I could. It's all right now. He's quiet. I've sent for two nurses. When did this begin?"

"Oh—this afternoon. He was ill

this morning, but not—violent. I couldn't—do anything with him."

"You've seen him today, then?"

"Oh—of course. Just now—an hour or so ago."

She started to get up from her chair, and uttered a cry of pain.

"My wrist—I think I've sprained it. I was trying to make him stay in bed."

She put up her right hand, and Graves took it in both his.

"Yes," he said. "Come upstairs and I'll bandage it."

He gave her his arm—she could hardly walk. She seemed in a half-stupor, asked no questions about her husband's state, and did not notice the dilapidation of Graves's usually smart appearance. Her light blue eyes stared fixedly at the floor. She breathed quickly and faintly, like some delicate animal in pain or fear. Graves did not try to talk to her. He rang for her maid, and when the bandaging was finished, ordered Mrs. Lindsay to bed. Then he was summoned to his other patient, who had recovered consciousness. The two nurses arriving at this time, he put them in charge of Lindsay, and finally, after more than an hour spent in the house, he got away on his delayed round of visits. He would not take the time to go home and change his dress, and the discomfort of his wet clothes, as he hugged himself up in the fur coat and rug, gave an additional edge to his inward rage.

"It's hell!" he said to himself savagely, again and again. "Just hell!" And his frowning brow and set mouth expressed an emotion that must find an outlet.

During the two years that he had been the Lindsays' family doctor, he had generally carried away from their home this same impression; but with time it had grown steadily stronger, and there was now a personal element in it. For the past year he had been a combatant on that field of battle. So far, he had been beaten in his effort to change what seemed to him—what was rapidly becoming to himself—an intolerable situation. But with each defeat he gathered fresh determination.

Each scene like that of today—and there had been many, more or less similar—enraged him anew, inspired him anew to conflict. What he was fighting was a woman's mind. Or, rather, not her mind, he said to himself fiercely, for she would not use it, but a kind of stupid instinct, slavish bondage to tradition, sentimentality.

He had used these harsh words to Mrs. Lindsay herself; he was now almost always angry with her. And yet it had happened to him—but much more during the first year of their acquaintance than the last—to see a sort of moral beauty in her attitude. In his daily contact with so many intimate miseries of mind and body, in his daily sight of so much human weakness, frivolity and folly, she for a long time had seemed to him a much nobler creature than he was likely ordinarily to see. Her idea of duty, her sacrifices, her sufferings, had moved him to sympathy, to admiration.

It was, at least, a sort of idealism, strong if narrow; and he saw little enough of the ideal in his daily life. But gradually the narrowness of Mary Lindsay impressed him more and her idealism less. She was so utterly mistaken! She had so little common sense! She was so romantic, in immolating herself to a brute like Lindsay, who in his drunkenness would strike her! Once Graves, at one of these periodical crises, had found her insensible on the floor. She had explained this away as a fainting fit. And the sprained wrist—that was another accident, no doubt. Graves carried the thought of it and of her look—beaten down, wounded, almost crushed—and of what he meant to say to her, all through his afternoon, which stretched on to nine o'clock. He seldom dined before half past nine or ten. Before going back to his house for that solitary meal, he made another visit to the Lindsays.

This time the house was calm. Lindsay was in a morphine-induced sleep; Mrs. Lindsay was finishing her dinner. She had left word for the doctor that Harold, the second child, was not well,

asking him to see the boy first and her afterwards. Graves found the child restless, nervous and unable to sleep. He was a delicate boy of six, with his mother's look. Graves ordered him a glass of hot milk and talked lightly with him for a few moments. Harold, who liked the doctor, settled down and closed his eyes when Graves, stroking his forehead, announced that the belated sandman had at last arrived. The governess turned out the light and left the room with the doctor.

"It's the effect on him of the disturbance this afternoon," she whispered.

"Indigestion," said Graves tartly. "Give him a dose of castor oil in the morning."

Then he went down to the dining room. He disliked that room for its ostentation of plate and old porcelain, that table, set out for a single person with flowers and silver, over which Mary Lindsay was lingering. She was quite herself again. She looked up at him with a faint smile and offered him her left hand. The right was hidden in the laces of her sleeve. She was as carefully dressed as ever, and even had a gold ribbon twisted as a fillet in her dark hair. Graves had come to hate her habitual exquisiteness, her evident love for dress and costly things. These were part of the mercantile atmosphere of the house, part of her price.

"How did you find Harold?" she asked anxiously.

"Oh, a little indigestion, caused by nervous disturbance probably."

"And—Mr. Lindsay?"

"Sleeping. Morphine. He'll be quieter tomorrow."

"What has happened to you?" She looked at his collar and coat sleeve.

"Oh, Lindsay threw a pitcher of water over me this afternoon. Then he tried to knock my brains out with the pitcher. I had to throw him. Didn't you hear the row?"

She got up from the table, even paler than before.

"I—no, I didn't hear," she stammered.

"Well, next time it will be you, perhaps—or one of the children. And

*you* won't be able to defend yourselves."

She looked down and said softly:

"Have you had your dinner? Sit down and eat something, won't you, with me?"

"Dinner—in Lindsay's house? No."

At that she flushed and lifted her head proudly.

"You don't mind abusing Lindsay in his own house, though," she said.

"No, I don't mind it a bit—if you call it abuse. I didn't mind knocking him down, either."

She came toward him and stood before the fire, looking at him with great, pathetic eyes. She looked as fragile as a flower.

"You're very harsh," she said slowly. "There was a time when I felt you were my friend—when you had some sympathy and—and kindness for me. But now you treat me like a criminal—as though—as though—you blamed *me*."

"And I *do* blame you," said Graves incisively, and looked at her with hard eyes. "I haven't a bit of sympathy for you. You're keeping up an impossible situation—ruinous for the children as well as yourself—merely out of conventionality—conventional sentiment, conventional pride. But you know what I think. I've said it all before. I'm going. Good night."

"You don't understand. You won't try to," she said quickly. "And so you are turning away from me. And you are the only person I have ever been able to speak to about it. I have nobody—"

"Then why won't you listen to me? You ought, for your own sake and the children's sakes, to separate from Lindsay, divorce him. What sort of a household, of a *home*, is this? The man's irresponsible!"

"You know he would never consent. He would never give up the children. He would fight it, and you don't know—you can't imagine—I don't know—what he *would* do! It would be a terrible blow to his reputation, his pride. And then the scandal, the publicity, the scenes!"



She shuddered.

"I know all that. I don't say it will be pleasant. But you can do it, and you *ought* to."

"Ah, that's just it! That's what you can never understand. I think—I ought not. The obligation I took upon myself does not end because the pleasantness of life is ended. I—"

She broke off and was silent, in her eyes the far-away, mystical look which he hated. There was no use in going on. All this had been said between them before, had been argued many times. It had been said again now, perhaps simply because they wished to say something to one another. The things that Graves had had in his mind during the afternoon, that he had meant to say, were now to remain unuttered. They were too bitter. He had meant to reproach her with clinging to Lindsay's fortune for herself and the children; for caring for the superficial worldly aspect of unity which was so pitiful a sham. But now he only looked at her sadly and distantly, looked at the lines in her face and throat which should not have been there, and went away without another word.

## II

EARLY in May Mrs. Lindsay took the children to the country house on Long Island. Lindsay continued his bachelor life in town, and after a month or so went to Cuba on business. Graves made a weekly visit of superintendence at the Long Island place. Neither of the children was strong, and Mary Lindsay consulted him minutely about every detail of their care and education. She was an almost morbidly careful and conscientious mother. She had accepted perforce the entire responsibility for the children's welfare, but it weighed heavily upon her. In the desire not to be absolutely alone in it, she attached perhaps an undue importance to Graves's advice and authority. Her mental combination of docility and obstinacy seemed to him a curious one, when he could contem-

plate it coldly. She was not a managing woman; her wish, apparently, was to be led, to be taken care of; yet in some ways she was as unyielding as rock. He could imagine how her persistence in certain ideas, rather austere and puritanic as was her tendency, and her quiet, persistent expression of them—for Mary had the elements of a nagger—must have irritated Lindsay all these years of their disunion. Graves knew that she had made a consistent, unrelaxing effort to prevent her husband from living as he chose. She had felt it her duty to keep him from living irregularly and drinking excessively, and all times and occasions were to her proper for this effort. She knew from experience that if she argued with or irritated Lindsay when he had been drinking she might expect physical violence, but that did not deter her. She had the courage—Graves recognized it with fear—of her convictions.

Now he rejoiced somberly in this respite of a few weeks for her. In his brief visits to her in the country he saw her gaining strength and color and equilibrium, emerging a little from under the weight of her bondage. She lived quite simply and for her children alone. For the moment she seemed almost happy; and her natural grace, calm and sweet and domestic in character, but tinged sometimes with a charming gaiety, began to appear to him more clearly than he had ever seen it.

It was midsummer before Graves himself could see his way clear to a month's vacation; and he was preparing for his much longed for plunge into Northern forests, when one morning a telephone message, repeated to the hospital where he was working, asked him to go at once to Mrs. Lindsay at the house in town.

He hurried through his work with a sinking heart. Mrs. Lindsay's maid admitted him and took him upstairs through the dark house, shrouded in linen and cooler than the scorching day outside. He found her in the little study adjoining her bedroom, looking over a mass of papers in her desk. She

wore a light traveling dress and hat. She turned and put out a hand to him and said quickly:

"Thank you. I *had* to see you. I'm sailing for Havana today. Mr. Lindsay is down with yellow fever in a hospital there. I had a cable last night. I want to ask you to look after the children for me—I mean, to go out twice a week, if you can, instead of once. Miss Watson will telephone you if anything is wrong in the meantime. They're well just now. Will you do this for me?"

Graves sat down in a chair near her and looked at her face, pale and strained now, and at her feverishly bright eyes. He, too, was pale. Overwork and the summer heat of the city had thinned and scored his face. He did not answer her at once, and she repeated her question nervously.

"Will you do what you can to help me? Can I feel that the children will be a little in your care while I'm away?"

At last he said deliberately:

"I'm pretty tired. I had arranged to go away on Monday up to the woods for a month."

"Oh!" she said faintly.

"I suppose I need a rest, perhaps. But why don't you ask me to give it up, and to stay and look after the children? Self-sacrifice is your law of life, isn't it?"

The irony of his tone startled and hurt her. She looked at him with wide eyes.

"Of course I shall not ask anything of the sort," she said.

"No, because you know that I would do anything on earth for you without your asking, if I knew what you wanted."

At the change in his voice a little color came into her face, and she said hesitatingly:

"You know I would not want you to make any sacrifice for me—much less give up this vacation that you need. I am sorry, that's all—but I hope they'll not be ill."

"And you say you are sailing today?"

"Yes, at two. I have my passage and my luggage has gone down."

"Are you taking Josephine?"

"Oh, no—there's a risk, you know. Of course I am going alone."

"Oh, of course. And what are you doing here, might I ask?"

"Oh, looking over some old letters and things—leaving some things for Josephine to burn." She pointed to a basket full of torn papers and smiled. "Old rubbish."

"Yes—in case you don't come back, you mean. You know your risk, then."

"Oh, yes," she said quickly.

Graves rose and walked to the open window, and stood looking out on the asphalt of the sultry street and the dull, thunderous sky.

"You think you are going down there into that nest of the plague?" he asked carelessly.

"I'm going. I must go. He's alone there."

"Is he? Well, if he is, he'll have to stay alone. You're not going."

"Of course I am. Do you think I shall leave him to live or die as he can, perhaps without proper care?"

"What could *you* do? Do you fancy yourself nursing a yellow fever patient? I suppose you do. But I don't."

"Well, I know that I can't stay here and know that he may be—dying—"

"If he's going to die it will be all over before you get there. But you will have the satisfaction of feeling that you've done the spectacular thing. A little thing like quarantine won't matter to you—or your chance of taking the fever and dying and leaving your children to get on without you. You will have lived up to your own idea of yourself, and that's the main thing."

He had spoken in a low, even tone, standing with his back to her; and now, suddenly wheeling round upon her, he cried:

"And I'm to stand by and watch the finish of this thing that I've seen going on for two years! I'm to aid and abet you in your colossal folly! I'm to look on at the last scene, help you onto the funeral pyre and applaud your beautiful end! I've often thought you a

stupid woman, Mary Lindsay, but I didn't think you were quite so silly as all this."

With her head bowed she moved about some papers on the desk. Her fingers trembled, and her voice, as she said:

"I supposed you would say this sort of thing."

"Yes, and you like it. Do you suppose I haven't seen that you like to see me angry? That you like me to say rough things to you? That you like to torment me?"

She pushed back her chair and looked angrily and proudly at him.

"That isn't true! I don't know why you say *that* sort of thing to me—"

"Yes, you *do* know. If you would only think about things, if you would only look facts in the face— But you want to keep the mask on, even to yourself—or rather, it's to yourself, above all, that you wear it. I tell you that you shan't sail today, that you will not go to Cuba. Your duty is most plainly here. It isn't duty that you're following, but something much less respectable. Look here!"

He came back and sat down again facing her, and his eyes held hers with all the intensity of his will.

"I've thought a good deal about you these two years. I've studied you. And I believe I understand you fairly well. I've seen a lot in you to admire. You've any amount of spirit and pluck, and you have will and constancy. It isn't moral virtues you lack. If you lack anything, Mary, it's intelligence—good, hard, practical horse sense. Well, that's commoner in the world than the qualities you have—there's a lot more intelligence than character in the world—but, all the same, it's a good thing. It's an especially good thing to combine the two, if possible."

He had talked on rapidly, his tone becoming more calm and even slightly pedagogical. Mary listened, looking at him. Now she turned her hand slightly and glanced at a tiny watch set in a bracelet on her wrist. He saw that glance and went on, his voice hardening.

"It is not your fault, of course, if you lack a broad intelligence. But you're bound to use what you have, and this you consistently refuse to do. You've set up for yourself a single ideal, that of constancy, faithfulness—and you've narrowed down that ideal to a single case. You demand of yourself to be faithful to the consequences of your mistake."

Here she would have interrupted, but he hurried on.

"I don't know why you married Lindsay. I can imagine the attraction of a man of his temperament in its pleasant aspect—and I know, too, that it's your sort of woman that men like him want to marry. I suppose that's enough. He wanted you, and you let him take you. Don't shrink and quiver. I'm going to talk to you this once frankly. Marriage is a practical affair, after all. You've made a religion of it—an Oriental, mystical idea of sacrifice. I don't know how soon you found out that your marriage was a mistake, but you've never admitted it. You've never been willing to see the consequences of that mistake. Your children are consequences. Your daughter has her father's temperament. Your boy has been weakly from his birth. You've given them a bad father. You owe them all the more of yourself. You owe yourself to *them* and not to Lindsay. You can do nothing, really, to change him. He'll go his own way, as he always has done; you're not much of a brake on that wheel. All you can do is to keep up appearances."

"Appearances!" he cried, and got up abruptly, and walked across the room and back. "It's really appearances you care for! It's your appearance to yourself you care for! You've said to yourself: 'No matter how *he* may fail, *I* will be perfect!' You're like the white ermine, that dies if it sees a spot on its whiteness!"

His voice broke, and for a moment he stood silent, staring out of the window.

"I used to think it beautiful," he went on in a low voice. "And it *is*—

just as a spectacle; it has a morbid kind of beauty. But it isn't a spectacle to me any longer. It's a torture. I see you wearing out your life. You're only thirty-two and you look forty. And the brute strikes you—my God! Don't deny it—I know it! He terrifies the household—the children; and you let it go on. You're burning yourself alive with his dead body—like a Hindoo widow; and all you see is the beautiful blue flame of the funeral pyre!"

He went to the window and leaned against the frame, drying his forehead. Not a breath of air entered from the gasping street. The thunderclouds had sunk lower over the city.

"I know," Graves said after a moment, and his voice trembled, "that you were going down there with the idea, perhaps the hope, that you might never come back. Life is too hard for you. But it is going to be easier, some way. You will find something else, someone, to help you to live. You won't throw your life away—you dare not. It isn't your own to give. It belongs to—those others."

She had sunk back in her chair, her eyes closed, and now tears began to flow from under the closed lids.

"Why do you make it harder—drag me back?" she gasped. "Oh, for Heaven's sake, don't make it harder for me!"

"Let you finish quickly, end it all, you mean. End it—that's your idea! Oh, I know! Pure self-indulgence! You see it yourself. And you thought I wouldn't see it and wouldn't make you admit it! You thought I would say a few sympathetic words and let you go. No, you didn't."

She wept, and at last stammered:

"You don't feel for me. You don't understand. If he dies there—alone—I shall have deserted him at last, after all these years, after all—the first time, perhaps, that he has really needed me. I cannot—"

Graves was silent until she sobbed convulsively.

"Don't! Or, yes, cry. So much the better," he murmured. And then, hesitating a moment longer, he came and

sat down by her and touched her hand gently.

"I think—probably—he will die," he said. "In his physical condition he has not much power of resistance. You may have word at any moment. I—I understand. Listen; you will feel more—it will be less hard for you—if I go. What time does the boat sail?"

She started and uncovered her reddened eyes and stared at him.

"You go—you!"

She drew a long breath and her eyes glowed strangely. She looked at him and laughed.

"You think I would let *you* go! Risk your life! You think I could take *that* from you!"

"There is less risk for me; I can take care of myself. I've been in yellow fever countries before this. And you can take that from me—or anything else I have to give. All I care about is that you should be less unhappy."

"And I should be less unhappy if I sent you down there? Perhaps you are not so very clever after all. Did you think for one moment I should let you take my place? What a fool you must be! Or what must you think of me? But *something* must be done." She twisted her hands in anguish. "Oh, let me go! Or tell me what to do!"

"I will cable for you. Give me all the addresses you can—his firm, the hospital, any people you know of there. I know a surgeon at one of the hospitals. I'll cable to them all. All shall be done that can be done. Give me the addresses now, quick! I'll come back here. I'll give this address for any replies. You'll hear something this afternoon. Josephine will get you some lunch. I'll telephone to the dock about your luggage. I'll get back as soon as I can, and I'll stay with you till you hear."

He hurried her, giving her no time for protest. And when she had given him the addresses he caught up his hat and said:

"You know, if you change your mind about my going, I am ready."

"Don't say that again!" she cried

sharply. "I've had enough to bear—and I shall have more. I feel like a murderess!"

"Don't be hysterical," said Graves. "There's no need. You may hear soon that he's all right. People don't invariably die of yellow fever, and you may depend on it, he'll have care. He'll always be looked out for, wherever he is. I shall be back in an hour."

He looked at her slender figure leaning on the chair, at her white face and strained eyes overflowing with tears.

"Try and lie down and rest a little," he said gently, and turned abruptly that she might not see the triumph in

his face. He went downstairs through the darkened house, whose heavy magnificence had so often irritated him—the taste of the master who would never come back. The chairs and sofas ranged along the dim walls in their stiff linen coverings, the shrouded chandeliers and pictures, seemed a funereal setting for some mournful ceremony. But there was no mourning in Graves's heart. His eyes shone, his face almost gleamed, with the keen sense of his victory. His jaw was firmly set, and he looked hard. He was not thinking of death—death was common enough—but of life.



## SONG OF THE SKYSCRAPER

By CHARLES C. JONES

**C**HILD of an age-bred art am I,  
Wrought of the hard won spoils of earth,  
Massive mate of the star-strewn sky,  
Lord of the hosts that gave me birth.

Grandeur speaks in my gray, grim breast,  
Steel-ribbed strength in my rearing walls,  
Grace sits throned on my lofty crest,  
Beauty dwells in my marble halls.

Heir am I to Egyptian lore,  
Heir to the graceful Grecian's prime,  
Heir to the strength of Rome, and more:  
Heir to the toiling might of Time.

Master mart of the age I stand—  
Winds of the morning round me whirled;  
Rugged and royal, graceful, grand;  
Monarch and power of all the world.



**I**T is not the song of the siren that does the damage, but the ears that hear it.

# MRS. JIMMIE'S DIPLOMACY

By IZOLA FORRESTER

YOUNG Mrs. Osborne looked up at her social secretary in laughing surprise. But there was no answering smile on the face of Kitty Howard. She held up the paper. It was a select and diplomatic list of the guests for Mrs. Osborne's dinner on the seventeenth. And all Ferncliffe was talking of that dinner, for, of the entire season's output of brides, young Mrs. Jimmie Osborne was absolutely the most interesting.

"You simply mustn't ask him if you ask her," exclaimed Kitty firmly, if ambiguously. "It's impossible. They haven't gone to the same places at all this season. They're never seen together in public. Everybody understands that it's merely a question of time."

"What is?" demanded Mrs. Osborne, still with a dimple showing mischievously in her left cheek, as she bent over the list.

"The divorce. Her father doesn't believe in divorce, and Lorraine knows that if she goes against his wishes, he will toss the whole thing over to her stepbrother, Everard, when he dies."

"I don't believe that's the reason at all," answered Mrs. Osborne, looking out the broad, low window at the sweep of the Highlands across the Hudson, their rolling summits mingling with the tender dove grays and hyacinth blues of the morning haze. "I know Lorraine Carroll fairly well. She is not the kind of girl who would waste her life's happiness waiting for her father's death to release her from a fancied obligation to his sense of right and wrong. Let's see. She married Alan Carroll last Christmas, didn't she, Kitty?"

"It was Christmas Eve," nodded the secretary. "They were married down at the Major's home in Georgia, and traveled abroad until July. But everyone saw right away that something was jangled in the bridal melody as soon as they showed up here. Dot Van Antwerp met them over in Paris in May, and she said poor Alan was looking awfully bored even then, and said he was sick and tired of being dragged around in a 'bubble' from the Campagna to the North Sea and back again."

"Cross Dot Van Antwerp's name off that list," said young Mrs. Osborne blithely. "She would jar the harmony."

"Then you really mean to invite them both?"

"I certainly do. I am not supposed to have a long distance private wire connected with the Carrolls' family troubles, and it is perfectly proper to invite them both. Besides, it will be fun."

Kitty shook her head dubiously. It was useless to argue when Mrs. Osborne showed her dimple, and had that far-away gleam of suppressed mischief in her merry blue eyes. The invitation was sent to Mr. and Mrs. Alan Delorme Carroll, The Cedars, Ferncliffe, N. J.

The evening of the seventeenth was threatened by sudden, fitful thunderstorms. No rain had fallen, but from the mountains great, low masses of clouds swept down, with far-off mutterings of thunder and vivid cuts of lightning, but before they reached the river the last sunset rays pierced and shredded them to mere, fluttering, wraithlike wisps of vapor.



"It will catch us just about ten o'clock," Jimmie Osborne remarked, pausing for a moment by the side of his charming wife. "Everybody here?"

"Everybody except—" Mrs. Osborne did not finish. Doubtfully, she had glanced over to where Alan Carroll stood talking with Grace Sewall. Grace was perfectly safe for him to talk with. She had taken up Sunday kindergarten work lately, and could be relied upon to bore him to death. And anxiously young Mrs. Osborne watched each newcomer. It lacked but five minutes of the dinner hour, and still no sign of Lorraine Carroll. Perhaps, after all, Kitty had been right. Suddenly she inclined her head with a gay smile of greeting, and with outstretched hand met the late guest who hesitated slightly as the footman announced her name.

"Mrs. Alan Delorme Carroll!"

For one half-minute she stood there, with the long, white sweep of drapery behind her, her beautiful young face lifted as if to meet the critical gaze of her kind. Society at Ferncliffe had not been overly cordial to this Southern bride. Alan Carroll it knew well and liked. It could not believe him to be in the wrong. And, anyway, it held it wise to look askance at those who would break the bond of wedlock before even the first year had passed. So, in a gentle way, it had disciplined Lorraine Carroll for her Georgia pride.

But suddenly, even as her hand touched that of her hostess, Mrs. Carroll caught sight of her husband. Their eyes met, hers flashing, his surprised and annoyed; then she passed on down the room, Bobbie Harrington claiming her as his partner for dinner.

"For Heaven's sake, Madge, do you know what you've done?" gasped Jimmie helplessly. "Alan is furious."

"I'm sure I don't know what you are talking about," replied little Mrs. Osborne firmly, but with her dimples in full evidence. "Alan is to take me in to dinner, and he's sulking over there in the corner. Tell him to come here

at once. They are waiting for me to lead the way."

It was by far the most successful dinner of the season. Even those who had come to criticize fully agreed that Mrs. Osborne had kept her reputation for originality, when they beheld the Carrolls seated at the same table. Not once did Lorraine's glance extend to the man beside her hostess. Smiling, with a touch of scorn on her full, curved lips, she listened to Bobbie's chatter or exchanged a word with her *vis-à-vis*, Jack Kinnaird. But little Mrs. Osborne, watching both her difficult guests, noticed with inward satisfaction how Carroll stared moodily down the table at the figure in white crape, with bands of silver gleaming Greek fashion in her heavy, chestnut-colored hair and a single magnolia bud on her breast.

"Have you seen much of Dot since your return?" she asked abruptly. Carroll shrugged his shoulders.

"She goes everywhere."

"Yes." Little Mrs. Osborne felt her way over the quicksand cautiously, and dallied with her salmi of quail. "Dot's very popular. She has a way, you know. Why, she was actually telling us the other day that she had had first chance at every single catch of the past three seasons."

"First chance?" repeated Carroll, with a man's flat, uncompromising frankness when dealing with the ambiguities of feminine gossip. "What did she mean?"

"Mean? Why, that all you boys had been dead in love with her and had been declined with thanks, as the first step in your social education."

He did not answer, but met Mrs. Osborne's gaze with clear directness, a world of trouble in his boyish, eager eyes. He wondered if that was what Dot Van Antwerp had told Lorraine that last night in Paris. It had all been a horrible blundering mistake, and nothing could explain away the damning facts but his word. He had gone for a run out to Fontainebleau with the Murrays from Aberdeen. Lorraine had made the trip so often

that she had pleaded fatigue. And he had left the Murrays to go on to Barbizon as an artistic pilgrimage. And, coming back, he had found Dot Van Antwerp stranded at a wayside inn, her chauffeur gone for help, her machine reduced to junk, and herself most adorably desolate and distressed. And Alan, foolish, chivalrous, even neighborly, had offered to take her on to Versailles, where she was to join the Sewall party. That was absolutely all. He had acted merely as official escort to a woman whom he knew and had possibly flirted with in the days of his cadet callowness.

But when he reached Versailles Lorraine was there, and explanations had been killed with quick scorn. She wanted no explanations. It was absolutely his own affair, she told him. He was free to act as he chose, she supposed. And Dot, misty-eyed, apologetic, positively vicious in her attitude of third party, had added fuel to the flames by her tearful explanations and her appeals to Alan to lift the cloud from her.

So, between the two, Carroll had shut his lips and refused even to deny where there was nothing to deny or to explain where there was nothing to explain. He knew the truth and his own motives, and if Lorraine cared to let a little, mischief-making, married flirt come between them and their life's happiness, why, that was up to her.

And there, in the softly lighted dining room, fragments of the story reached Mrs. Osborne, drawn from him by her sympathy and silent comprehension. When he had finished she nodded her pretty head wisely.

"I knew it was Dot's doing," she said firmly. "I told Jimmie she was at the bottom of it. Now listen, Alan. You—you love Lorraine still, don't you?"

"So much that she simply holds my life in the balance," he answered bitterly. "She refuses to see me or talk to me. I even tried to get her on the 'phone the other day on a matter of business—think of it, my own wife!—and she sent her secretary to talk to me. Can you imagine it?"

"Somewhat," laughed Mrs. Osborne, as she rose from the table. "Go out on the south balcony when you have finished smoking. There isn't a 'phone there, but—"

His eyes followed her eagerly, but Mrs. Jimmie went on, happy in her own campaign.

"I want to show you our new loggia," she told Lorraine. "Jimmie likes to gaze at the moon through vines and between colonnades, and he had this one copied from the little old villa we had last year at Florence."

Lorraine followed her hostess willingly. She felt she could not bear the music and chatter. The evening air cooled her face, and she stood in silence under the great stone arches, looking out at the storm-clouded sky. A vagrant new moon was riding gallantly to the south, a mere silver wisp in the racing clouds.

"I forgot," Mrs. Osborne said, "Mirielle is to sing some of her crazy little chansonettes as soon as the men come in. I must see that she doesn't get huffy. You know her little ways if she's neglected."

Lorraine nodded wearily and leaned forward on the stone balustrade. She wished it were over, the whole wretched, hopeless heartache and pain of wrenching apart the ties. It had been not only the fact of that ride together from Fontainebleau, but the hundred and one little innuendoes Dot Van Antwerp had tossed to her ever since her marriage. She had said that Alan had asked her to be his wife, had hinted at letters she held, had sympathized with him and tortured her in ways the significance of which only a woman could appreciate.

Now she cared no longer. If he wanted his freedom—

Suddenly she caught her breath. Without a word, she felt herself imprisoned in a close embrace. His way, Alan's way—she knew it well. His arms reached around her and turned her to him, her face back on his shoulder, his lips pressed to hers. She closed her eyes with a quick, joyous sense of helplessness and relief.

The first rippling chords of Mirielle's opening song reached them, then her voice, rich, uneven, mellow, like a boy's alto, singing some rollicking, tender, pathetic ditty of Montmartre, of "Pauvre Polichinelle" and his love for a sugar candy baby doll over in the confectioner's, a poor little sugar candy baby doll that, all unwittingly, he kissed until it melted and was gone.

"Don't miss it, Lorraine," called little Mrs. Osborne from the window. "It's storming, Jimmie says. You had better come in."

"The storm's over, thanks, Mrs. Jimmie," said Alan over his shoulder. "It's all moonshine out here."

"Honeymoonshine?" queried Mrs. Jimmie wickedly. But there was no answer this time.



## A BALLADE OF DELIGHTS

By WILLIS LEONARD CLANAHAN

A BLAZING fire of anthracite,  
     A book, a friend, a glass to cheer,  
     An easy chair, a wintry night,  
     A crimson-shaded chandelier,  
     A pair of velvet slippers near,  
 A cot with pillows soft and white,  
     A message we have longed to hear:  
 These are the things which most delight.

A summer day, when skies are bright,  
     A hazy time, when far and near  
 The mocking bird with all his might  
     Sings mimic songs we joy to hear;  
     A brook that ripples toward the mere;  
 The oaks, which wave upon the height  
     Their massive arms, like giant's spear:  
 These are the things which most delight.

A pleasing thought, a fancy bright,  
     A Keats or Shelley lying near;  
 A dream of one whose soul is white  
     And dwells in holy atmosphere;  
     An inspiration calm and clear,  
 That leads the soul to greater height;  
     These are the things to poets dear:  
 These are the things which most delight.

### L'ENVOI

Princess, whose presence lends me cheer,  
     And for whose gentle sake I write  
 The humble thoughts concentrated here:  
     These are the things which most delight.

# THE COMING OF THE PRINCE

By MARION WHITNEY

THE very atmosphere was redolent of love. The air itself, trembling beneath its own overwhelming sweetness, seemed to quiver with an ecstasy of bygone lovers' meetings, a passion of farewells. It seemed an insult to Nature that Miss Anne Wilmot should be seated there placidly reading the latest psychological novel, and that it should be Sir Robert Cameron who found her. He stood hesitating in the entrance to the arbor, his military sparseness framed incongruously in a riotous wealth of roses.

"Am I intruding?" he inquired anxiously. "Is this your own particular *sanctum sanctorum*?"

It was, but Miss Wilmot politely disclaimed it. "I should hardly be selfish enough to monopolize so much loveliness," she assured him, trying to keep the very obvious regret from her voice.

It was a graceful opening, but Sir Robert was not a man to make pretty speeches, and few men, indeed, dared to attempt them under the gentle irony of Miss Wilmot's pleasant gaze. She closed her book reluctantly now, observing with inward dismay that Sir Robert was settling himself in uncompromising discomfort on the narrow bench before her.

His opening inquiry dissipated the mild conversational beginning she was about to attempt. "Miss Wilmot," he demanded abruptly, "do you consider yourself a well informed woman?"

The courteous boredom of Miss Wilmot's expression changed to a somewhat startled amusement. "It would depend on whether modesty or truthfulness influenced my reply," she retorted mirthfully.

"I have always considered you so," continued Sir Robert unsmilingly, "and that is why I cannot reconcile your attitude of total indifference to one of the burning and vital questions of the day."

She interrogated him with delicate, uplifted brows. "I am referring to my marriage," added Sir Robert solemnly.

Miss Wilmot scrutinized him, not quite certain from their few former conversations how to take his grim humor. The inscrutableness of his weary eyes had always baffled her, but this time they held unmistakable laughter. She laughed, too.

"You must forgive me," she pleaded.

"I was not aware any such important ultimatum had been decided on."

"It hasn't," returned Sir Robert mournfully. "The fate of the nation still hangs in the balance. For one year, Miss Wilmot," he went on with increasing gloom, "I have been a hunted man. Society has leagued itself in the common cause—to drag me to the altar, and though I say it, who shouldn't, only a series of masterly and Napoleonic retreats have thus far enabled me to elude pursuit. But I am no longer young," pursued Sir Robert plaintively, "and they are wearing me out. They are closing in upon me."

"You poor modern Atalanta!" commented the sympathetic Miss Wilmot with dancing eyes.

"Far be it from me to be cynical," said Sir Robert. "I merely state as a totally irrelevant fact that for forty-odd years these manly charms have languished before that selfsame society in strange obscurity, which only my accession to my cousin's millions inexplicably dissipated. Since then every-

one has displayed a friendly, I may say, feverish, interest in my affairs—especially my married friends of the female persuasion,” he remarked with some grimness. “You alone,” he accused her sternly, “have evinced a criminal neglect of this all absorbing topic.”

“You wrong me,” Miss Wilmot defended herself gaily. “I am staying on at this house party fully two weeks longer than I had intended for no other reason than to see who will win out in the race.”

Sir Robert leaned over and began with his riding crop to institute an absorbing number of flank movements upon a dazed and unoffending insect at his feet. “That is what I wanted to consult you about,” he said.

“Oh, please,” begged Miss Wilmot, putting out a slender, deprecatory hand, “don’t confide in me nor ask my advice. One feels so uncomfortable afterward, and one *never* takes the advice.”

“I wasn’t going to ask your advice,” said Sir Robert, still poking frantically at his unhappy victim; “I was going to ask you—would *you* marry me?”

“I,” gasped Miss Wilmot, “I!” For the first time in her life her easy graciousness of poise deserted her, and she stared at him breathless, open-eyed. Then she straightened herself superbly, her head high, all her pride of race blazing in her dark eyes.

“I don’t quite understand you,” she said with freezing hauteur. “Is this a jest, or in the nature of a philanthropic proposition?”

Sir Robert looked up then, aghast at the anger in her face. “I am asking you to marry me,” he repeated doggedly.

“And I am asking you why,” returned Miss Wilmot icily. “Why should the most sought after man in England wish to marry a poor obscure spinster of uncertain age and doubtful attractions—if not for charity?”

He sprang to his feet. “Charity!” he cried furiously. He stood with his back to her for a moment, staring

down at the little laughing river beneath them, and when he spoke again it was with a curious quietness which made her feel suddenly very much ashamed.

“You are unfair both to yourself and to me,” he said. “I wish to get married. I owe it to my name and the place I hold, and I am rather particular as to the woman I choose to bear that name and place. It is to be a bargain, of course,” went on Sir Robert drearily. “There can be no pretense of love in it; it is too late for that now, and that part of my life is over and done with. But I thought there might be at least companionship. I am a lonely man. I have knocked around the world now for thirty years, and I want a home. I have a horror of these half-formed, fortune hunting girls who have been hurled at my head continuously this last year. I want a woman of breeding, a woman of intellect, a woman of heart, and I have thought you all this. Of all the women I know, I most admire and respect you. That is why I wish to marry you.”

“Forgive me,” said Miss Wilmot simply. “And thank you.”

She moved restlessly under his inscrutably expectant gaze, putting her hand over her eyes with a favorite little gesture. “I am thirty-three years old,” she said aloud, more as if to convince herself than speaking to him. “I am poor; I am alone in the world, save for these cousins here. I have nothing to look forward to in life. No one will probably ever ask me to marry him again. It would be madness for me to refuse—every dictate of reason and common sense tells me that—and yet—and yet—” She broke off piteously.

“There is someone else,” said Sir Robert comprehendingly, and looked chivalrously away from the revelation of the painful blush which burned its way to her dark hair. “I, too—” He checked himself abruptly. “But, God knows, we aren’t taking anything from *them* by this. It’s a poor substitute for the real thing—I know that—but

since that's over for us, isn't this better than nothing?"

"Yes, yes; better than nothing," she assented, with an odd passion in her soft voice. Then, with the gentle dignity which marked her always, she said: "I accept very gratefully, Sir Robert."

"And we can be friends?" he asked rather wistfully, holding out his hand.

Miss Wilmot gave her friendship slowly and with exceeding sureness. She studied now with deliberate intentness the face before her, stern, strong, grim even to forbiddingness in repose, but with a sudden winning boyishness of look and smile which softened wonderfully the keenness of the gray eyes and the bitter humor of the mouth. She laid her slim hand in his.

"It is a wonderful thing for me," she told him frankly, as they made their way up to the house. "It out-Cinderellas Cinderella."

"I make a poor prince," said Sir Robert gravely, "but I will be good to you."

"Will you tell the proud sisters tonight?" he asked her whimsically later, when he had induced her to set an early date for their marriage.

"Oh, please, no!" implored Miss Wilmot in genuine dismay. "Don't tell anyone until just before it happens. They will all talk and wonder so about it, and it isn't as if it were a girl announcing her engagement. It seems so silly, I am so old."

"Nonsense!" said Sir Robert sharply. "But of course it shall be as you wish."

Miss Wilmot dressed for dinner in a curious maze of emotions. With a sense of beautiful and reckless extravagance, she donned her one elaborate gown, as one for whom the future held endless rosy vistas of "best gowns." Then, with a sudden revulsion of feeling, with crimsoning cheeks she tore it indignantly from her. "Am I a girl dressing for her lover?" she asked herself hotly, and fastened with trembling fingers her customary simple evening attire. Logical third thought

convinced her that the feminine distinction between the two would be totally lost upon Sir Robert, if he took the trouble to observe her at all. But the same feeling led her to discard the flowers he had sent up to her, with the first touch of bitterness her sweet life had known.

"No, no, Anne," she told the face in the glass, which belied her words, "white dresses and red roses can't add up to thirty-three, cheat as you will."

She went down at last, outwardly her graceful serenity undisturbed, inwardly fighting a terrified reluctance to meet Sir Robert's eyes. Again that fierce wave of scathing self-contempt broke over her when she finally dared trust herself to look at him, and found him, totally oblivious of her presence, according his usual weary courtesy to the pretty girl beside him. Anne herself was not a sufficiently exalted character to be put beside the distinguished guest, but she had hitherto taken an amused and detached enjoyment in watching the rivalries for Sir Robert's impassive attentions. Tonight, to her vexation, she could not quite recover her old serene mental balance, that healthy interest in the things and people about her which made up a large part of her delicate, high bred charm.

Later, while she and Sir Robert played decorously at the same bridge table, she found herself watching, still with that new inexplicable bitterness, an engaged couple near by who openly scorned cards, and sat, instead, shamelessly gazing into each other's eyes. A vision of herself and Sir Robert in any such picturesque attitude struck her with such sardonic humor that she laughed suddenly aloud.

But, upstairs, leaning from her window after the lights were out, even the humor of it failed her when she saw them in the rose garden beneath her. They were a commonplace enough pair of lovers, but it was not the kindly moonlight alone which glorified them. The ineffable splendor of youth and poetry and love was about them, transfiguring them. Anne Wilmot hid against it eyes blinded by tears.



Sir Robert had promised that he would be good to her, and, brief as was their acquaintance, she believed him. In the days which followed, constant evidences of the most delicate courtesy, the most chivalrous kindness, deepened her trust, but did not lessen that strange soreness of spirit which chafed her at every turn. They had no further opportunity for *tête-à-têtes* since their last momentous one, until ten days later, secure in her favorite retreat, Anne looked up to find him, as before, in the doorway. He was beaming delightedly upon her.

"I knew you were planning to be up here when you wouldn't go on the ride," he explained with boyish eagerness; "so, with Machiavellian craft and an obliging stone in my horse's foot, I escaped the vigilant eye of the Match-makers' Union and rushed back here. I've got a boat down there. Would you dare trust yourself in it with me?"

He was like a schoolboy on a holiday as he helped her in, and they started down the joyous little river. His taciturnity and grim humor dropped from him, and Anne, responding to his mood, gave herself up whole-heartedly to the charm of the golden afternoon, the sparkling water and this new, sympathetic, boyishly enthusiastic Sir Robert. They laughed like children over the veriest trifles; they argued and sparred and jested merrily with a growing delightful sense of good fellowship. Later, as the shadows began to steal along the sunny banks, the man, breaking with an effort through a lifetime's reserve, told her of himself; stories of his lonely childhood, until Anne's heart yearned maternally over the little motherless lad; tales of his campaigns, which made her breath come quick and her warrior blood leap in her veins; of adventures in unknown lands, while she listened in unconscious and charming absorption, her chin on her hand. Sir Robert smiled sympathetically at her shining eyes.

"You would like things like that, too," I believe, he told her admiringly; "travel and adventure and strange sights."

"I would," affirmed Anne recklessly. "Staid old maid as I am, I have always yearned for just such things."

"You shall have them," declared Sir Robert. "Just wait until we are married!"

With the words an odd constraint fell upon them both. They moored the boat and went up to the house, groping vainly for the lost easy comradeship. But the spell had been broken, and the old formality was between them as they said good night.

Miss Wilmot did not appear at dinner. It was late the next afternoon when Sir Robert, his grimmest and most impassive self, confronted her in their old meeting place. He held her note in his hand.

"I don't quite understand your breaking our engagement," he attacked her at once, with quiet dignity. "Did I do or say anything yesterday to offend you? I wish you would tell me, please."

Miss Wilmot shook her head. "Please don't think anything like that," she implored wretchedly. "You have been most kind, most generous, throughout." Then, as he waited in uncompromising expectancy, she wrung her hands with a kind of impotent despair. "I can never make you understand," she said hopelessly.

But she began speaking immediately, with a restrained impetuosity new to her low voice, an inner passion which swayed her slight frame and sent a tremulous color to her pale cheeks.

"You think the reason I have never married is because I have cared for someone. I let you think so. It isn't true. There never was anyone at all."

Sir Robert gave a stifled exclamation. Miss Wilmot went on unheeding, her piteous gaze always on the river.

"I was such a happy girl. Life was so kind to me. And there were men, of course, who cared for me—good matches, some of them, and men I liked and was even fond of. But there was never anyone—" She stopped with a hopeless little gesture. "What is the use of my trying to explain to

you what I wanted, what I was waiting for?" she broke out despairingly. "I hardly knew, myself, but I never lost my faith in it—that *something*, that divine touch which makes one person out of the whole world the sum of one's happiness, which can transform even that commonplace little Sadie Waring into a being glorified, apart. Oh, I know there are people who don't believe in it! I have seen friends of mine marry without it, and they have seemed happy marriages, too. But I would never compromise." She lifted her dark head proudly. "I would have everything or nothing. At first it was easy, but when my father died and I saw my belledom going and my youth slipping from me, it was harder to keep faith. But I still clung to it until you came; and I was so tired—and it was such a good bargain"—she flung out the words with a cruel bitterness—"I gave in."

"Of course," said Sir Robert heavily at last, "I could never hope to make you feel like that. I told you I should make a poor prince."

His face was turned from her, but, despite the military bearing, something in the utter dejection and pathos of his whole figure moved her inexpressibly, and swept away all her reserves and concealments.

"That is why I can't marry you," she said with a beautiful simplicity. "You *are* the prince."

There was an exquisite, shamed color in her cheeks. Her proud eyes defied his pity.

"I could have gone on with it if it hadn't been for that. Giving nothing, I could take nothing. But yesterday I *knew*—though I think it must have been from the very first. That is why I was so bitter about it all."

"Anne," cried Sir Robert brokenly, "Anne, Anne!"

His strong hands shook as he drew

from an inner pocket a glove and a withered rose.

"You dropped that glove the night I met you," explained Sir Robert unsteadily. "And the rose you wore four nights later. You wouldn't wear my flowers; that hurt so. I have kept these ever since; they were all I had of you. Oh, Anne, couldn't you see?"

The mask was down at last, the stern face transfigured, the man's starved, worshipping heart looking from the eyes she had never been able to read. Her brave glance fell before the tenderness of his.

He stumbled on haltingly, stammering, but eloquent with a passionate sincerity. "I loved you from the first moment I met you. I came to this house just because I knew you were to be here. All my life I've dreamed of such a woman as you, of such a love as this. I gave up all hope of it long ago—until I found you. Why, there was never anyone like you in the world. There's not a girl among them all with half your purity and freshness and charm. And there's never been anyone else but you for me, dear. Blind fool that I was, I lied to you. I knew so little of women," Sir Robert went on humbly. "You were so remote, so indifferent, I was afraid you would be angry or laugh at me. I thought this such a clever scheme to win you"—his deep voice shook in fierce self-scorn—"treating it as a joke and driveling to you of reason and common sense, with my heart breaking for you; having to play bridge with you and watch those other lovers! Why, what does a half-fledged boy like that know of love?" cried Sir Robert with a masterful and compelling passion. "Anne, Anne, look at me, dear! Let me show you what a man's love is!"

She lifted her beautiful eyes to his. The prince had come into his kingdom.



**M**EMORIES needing mementoes to maintain them are better dead.

# THE RESTLESS HEART

By ELSIE C. KING

**B**LUE his eyes and gold his hair, sweet his smile and gay.  
Life and youth and all that's fair,  
Sure our love will bide fore'er,  
Ever and a day.

Clasp of hand and thrill of tear, this the love to last—  
Hark! The whisper in my ear! Who was that who passed  
Like the sudden, shadowing cloud  
Of a chilling rain?  
Oh, my heart, my restless heart, is up and off again!

Dark his locks and dark his eyes, sweet his voice and low.  
Where he is my future lies;  
Ours the love that time defies;  
Gladly would I go  
To the end of life, his slave. This the love to last—  
Who was that a signal gave? Who was that who passed?  
Who is calling far away,  
Sweet and yet in pain?  
Oh, my heart, my fickle heart, is up and off again!

Gray his eyes as evening sea, shaded dark his brow.  
Hot his lips that lingeringly  
Hold the warm red mouth of me—  
Who is calling now?  
Beats his heart against my own; this the love to last—  
Hark, the sound that's half a moan! Who was that who passed?  
Far away and far away  
Sounds a sad refrain—  
Oh, my heart, my willful heart, is up and off again!



**T**HE real hero is he who can bear his own troubles as stoically as he does those of his friends.

# "O MÈRE DES SOUVENIRS"

By G. M. HUDDART

**T**O begin with, I have no heart. If I had, Rudolf Lemoreau might still be living the life of a dry-as-dust millionaire in Park Lane. He is not.

I have known him for seven years, and, ordinarily, I say he is a good friend to me. On sundry occasions, however, when I am angry, I say he is a consummate fool. When he is angry, he says the two things are synonymous. But that is beside the mark. I picked him up in Paris—on the "Boule Miche," to be exact. He was an idler, and he inherited money. It is the privilege of idlers—just as it is the privilege of hard working, respectable men to bequeath it. He had written one brilliant book, at the rate of about twenty words per week. He greeted me first during one of my very few spare quarters of an hour in the week. I was drinking coffee on the pavement, and he chanced to be drinking liqueur at the next table.

"Forgive me," he said, "but I have seen you about so often that I feel I should wish you good day."

I bowed and made an appropriate answer. It is one of the things I live for, being a Frenchman.

He raised his shoulders. "Here am I," he said abruptly, "in the Latin Quarter, not studying art."

"Then what?" I began.

"Artists."

I smiled. "Which is the branch and which the tree?" I asked. "Does art spring from artists, or artists from art?"

"I cannot tell you, unless you can tell me this: Does the idea of God come from man, or the idea of man from God?"

"Quits," said I.

He emptied his glass and came to my table. "If you chance to be this way on Monday night, will you look out for me?"

"Certainly I will."

He rose and left me without another word.

I thought it over. There are only two things that can make me do that: either that I am amused, or that I am visited by a new sensation. The latter case is extremely rare, but it occurred then.

The ingredients of this sensation were, of course, not new. They were interest, a vague surprise and a powerful attraction. But I have never known them so wonderfully mixed, and therefore I came to ponder the result.

I made a point of passing that particular place on the Monday night, and I saw Rudolf sitting there with three French students. He did not see me, and I went forward slowly, so that I might paddle into the conversation, rather than dive. I was soon in it, up to my eyes. They were discussing with intense fervor the drawing in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, and they continued the subject until, some half hour later, the party broke up.

"I thought," said I to Rudolf, "that you were not particularly engrossed in art. How did that argument interest you?"

"It didn't. It interested them, and I watched." He leaned back and smiled. "But I wanted them to go," he said slowly.

"Yes?"

"Yes, because I wanted to tell you something that has happened to me."

I expected it. I asked you tonight on purpose."

I waited.

"Since seeing you last, *mon ami*, I am become a millionaire."

I met his eyes. "What waste!" I exclaimed.

"Waste! Of what?"

"Of you."

He made a little grimace. "I was wondering," he said after a moment, "how that same event would have affected you." He narrowed his eyes and scrutinized my face. "What would you have done?"

"Several trivial things; nothing great."

"Tell me one of those things."

"Well—I would have paid my rent."

"Yes, I've done that. But I've done more; I've bought a house in Park Lane, London, and had myself put in print."

I said nothing.

"Man!" he cried in sudden exasperation. "Can't you criticize? What do you think of it?"

"I think it's rotten," said I deliberately. "But then, remember, I'm a Bohemian born and bred."

"I'm not. I'm a cross between a Frenchman and an Austrian, and the aristocratic instinct is ineradicable from me."

Yet I did not believe him. I could not picture him in the society that he had chosen. I laughed afterward, when I thought of it. "Strange, too," I said to him in my mind, "that I should know you so well!" I forgot, for the moment, that knowledge is not a matter of time, that there are simple things which one man may not be able to learn in a hundred years, and obscure and gigantic facts which another man may grasp in an instant. The secret of knowledge is surely nothing but a correspondence between the mind and the subject.

The next time I saw Lemoreau was about a week later, in his rooms. In theory, he was immensely happy; as a companion, he was terribly fidgety.

"If you are so contented," I suggested, after watching him pace the

room for some five consecutive minutes, "why don't you sit down and smoke?"

He seemed slightly perplexed. The fact that it had not occurred to him rather interfered with his theory for an instant. But he recovered.

"Because," he said, "I feel that I'm wasting time. I ought to be in London now."

"Does that matter?"

"Certainly. If it weren't for one or two tiresome little bits of business, I should be gone."

He drew a chair toward him and sat down. "Still, there *is* the business," he murmured to himself.

"Now about London," said I. "I understand that you are going to live there—in the season; and consequently that you are going to live everywhere else in the season; in Scotland, in the South of France, in Egypt, in the English Midlands and so on—in the season. Is that so?"

"Yes. I've had years of knocking around in places that have no season; the byways of the world and life. Orthodoxy is my haven of rest."

I lifted my shoulders. "Well, it is very simple and easy, so long as you can afford it. Your moral code—"

"I have none. Circumstances make things right or wrong."

"Your moral code," I repeated firmly, "will be according to what is 'done' or not 'done.' It is always quite definite. For my own part, I think it very excellent, only I can't be bothered with it."

Rudolf leaned forward, rested his arms upon his knees and clasped his hands. "There was once," he said softly, "a little girl who looked very like an elf in a story book, but who was human enough to do what she thought was right." He paused.

I studied his face, and wondered at the story I found there. Then, as I watched, the story faded—or, perhaps, it was only the memory of it that I had seen—and the man sat up and took a cigarette.

"I admired her for it," he said in a particularly level voice, "and I agreed

with her—afterward. This, that I am doing now, may not deserve the title of 'right'; but it's the next thing: it's 'fitting.'"

I rose and held out my hand. "Good-bye," said I. "No doubt you know best where to find your welfare. But you'll find me in Paris—when you come."

I went out into the street with a strong sense of disappointment upon me. Who was this elf girl, anyhow? And why did Rudolf Lemoreau remember her? Why should a desire to imitate her virtues cause him to give up a life that he had chosen for himself from the first, and that was, obviously, the one that most enlarged and stimulated his mind? I was vexed. I hate moonshine. Later I put the question aside and awaited the outcome of it all.

For months I heard nothing more of Rudolf. Then I read about his doings in a newspaper. They were very banal. He had "been to Scotland." He had "shot well." He "was very popular." Of course. These days a man is as popular as he can afford to be. But, so far as I could trace, there was no result of his study of artists—no further use of his pen.

One evening I threw down the paper in exasperation and went out. I went to a small café that I knew well, in a side street, not far from St. Etienne du Mont. I found myself the first of the after-dinner *consommateurs*, but the second was not long after me. He was a student whom I knew, but he did not see me, and chose a table at the further end of the little awning. I was wondering if I should speak to him, when there arrived a party of three—two women and a man—who immediately joined him. The man and one woman were past middle age, and were extremely dull to look at; the other woman was the reverse. She had a face whose extraordinary charm riveted my attention instantly. It was, I discovered secondly, a beautiful face, but the discovery scarcely increased my satisfaction. I watched her intently for an hour—and then I knocked

over my empty glass. It clinked sharply on the table, rolled off and broke. The whole party turned round—and my friend recognized me. "A misfortune!" he said.

"It matters very little; I had finished my drink." I turned to pay the waiter, raising my hat with an air of finality. But my friend came up to me as I was leaving.

"Come and join us," he said. "I haven't seen you for a long time. I think one of these ladies will interest you."

"I know she will," said I, and we turned back together.

I was presented, and sat between my host and the woman. "My cousins," she said, indicating the non-descript persons opposite, "are making with me a little tour of inspection. I used to know this quarter."

"Used?" said I. "Not long enough ago to have forgotten."

She smiled. "No, but long enough to want to be reminded. Pictures get dim in time." She drooped her eyelids, as if she peered at some faded canvas that she sorely wished to see.

"Isn't it just as well, mademoiselle? For my part, I rub most of them out—all, in fact, but the pleasant ones."

"The Quartier Latin is a pleasant one, monsieur." She lifted her head and glanced about her at the narrow, commonplace street. "This, for instance. I have enjoyed myself so here."

I sipped my Grenadine. "It is very possible—but only in one spirit."

She gave me a quizzical glance. "Y—yes," she assented slowly. "I had that spirit. You see, I *might* have been an artists' model." She looked straight into my face. "But I left Paris; I have played the artist's part instead."

My host, hearing the last sentence, answered her. "It is well. The portraits are charming already."

Then the cousins took the subject up, and I dropped it.

I went home less annoyed with my fellow beings. I had gained a fresh acquaintance, and an invitation to continue it. I was well satisfied. For I

treat life as I treat rich men: the more they have, the less I demand of them—and the less I get. Life is supremely rich.

I saw the woman, Hélène Dussart, again on several occasions during the next month. I saw, also, the cousins. I learned that they had once refused her shelter because her mother was a model, and she, when both parents died, drifted toward the same livelihood; that something stopped her drifting; that she went out into the world alone, for something's sake. But I neither knew nor sought to know what that something was.

One afternoon Hélène Dussart and I went into the Luxembourg Gardens for a stroll.

"This is the first time," she said, stopping to look around her, "that I have been here since I returned to France." She flushed. "I remember this garden best of all."

"Yet you come to be reminded."

"Yes." She began to walk slowly on. "Whether I will or no, I must come back. Isn't it Baudelaire who cries out, '*O mère des souvenirs, maîtresse des maîtresses*'? That is it. She brought me."

"You serve strange gods," said I.

"Very possibly. That is because I am content to serve in the dark." She turned to me quickly. "Tell me, will you give me your candid judgment if I put before you a certain case?"

"I will endeavor, mademoiselle."

She hesitated. I saw her lips twitch slightly. "Some years ago," she commenced tentatively, "there was a young man living in Paris, who had come especially to watch the Latin Quarter. He had a little money; he had a good position; he was intensely clever. Do I tire you, monsieur?"

"N-no," said I slowly; "but take care you don't tell me more than you mean to."

She smiled a little. "I think I am safe," she said. "Well, this man fell in love with an—artist's model."

She turned her head and I could feel that she was observing me closely. "He was impulsive and generous, and

he wanted to marry her." A short pause, then abruptly: "What ought the girl to have done?"

"'Ought' means very little to me," I answered. "So far as I see, there was a great sacrifice she could make, a great test of herself and the man, a great proof of strength she could give, by doing"—I met her eyes suddenly—"what you did."

I watched the red color gradually dye her throat, her cheeks, her forehead; but she did not know I watched. The blush died away and left a bright flush on either cheek and a queer, bright look in her eyes. Then she stretched out her hand.

"Keep that sacred," she said, scarcely above a whisper. "I claim you for a friend."

I raised the hand to my lips in silence.

From that day forward I wondered. Had two stories been told me, or had I come upon only the two halves of one? The riddle was not solved, and I determined to put into practice the trick that life had taught me best—I waited.

It happened, early in May of that year, that I had some affairs which called me to London. The day before I left Paris I went to say *au revoir* to Mademoiselle Dussart.

"I am especially glad that you are come," she said, "because I have just finished a piece of work, and I would like you to see it."

"At last!" I exclaimed. "You will admit I have been patient. Not a bit of your canvas have I seen yet."

She smiled a trifle wistfully. "No. I wanted to show you this."

"Yes?"

"I don't want—to show it to anyone else. You see, monsieur, it is a portrait, painted without permission."

"Without permission!" I exclaimed. "But—how?"

"From memory," she said quietly.

I understood. "Let me warn you again," I said. "The picture may tell me too much."

But she only shook her head.

Her studio led off from the *salon*, and I had occasionally caught glimpses



of it through the open door. They had been tempting glimpses, and I felt very willing to go in and look about me.

She threw back the folding doors and motioned to me to pass her. I obeyed.

A few small easels stood at various angles in the room, and there were some studies of male heads on the walls; but I hardly noticed these things, because right before me, on the largest easel of all, stood one of the most living likenesses I have ever seen. There was a little red curtain drawn aside from this picture, and the canvas was already framed. Somehow, the details impressed me vividly, although I stopped in front of the portrait itself, catching my breath and gaping.

For it was Rudolf Lemoreau's face at which I was staring.

Even though I had wondered so long, the answer to my mental question came as a shock. The story was one—and I had but heard it in two halves. The elf girl was the woman beside me; the "popular" millionaire was the man whose portrait was before my eyes. I saw the two lives, so utterly divided every day, joined for their whole term by an indestructible link. "*O mère des souvenirs!*" I caught myself murmuring.

"Well?" said Hélène gently. "Do you—" Her voice faltered.

"Yes," said I; "I know him."

She looked from my face to the one on the canvas, and back again to mine. "Tell me," she said.

I told her how I met him, how he had left me—all but what he had said of herself.

When I stopped speaking she met my eyes, and I turned away. Some mad demon in me was cursing in a fashion she might not know.

"You see," she said presently, "his life has planned itself better without me. I'm glad I went."

I rose abruptly. Things I did not wish to say were getting dangerously near my lips. I held out my hand.

"Thank you, mademoiselle, for showing me your work. It is, in my judgment, quite perfect."

She did not take my hand. "Before you go, I want you to—to agree with me."

Then some of those words got loose. "If you want to hear that I think you did a strong, straight, noble thing, you hear it; if you want to hear that there are some women men ought to be thankful to heaven for, and that you're one, you hear it; but you will never hear from me that a monstrous banking account justifies a man in stultifying his brain, pampering and poisoning his body and transforming a vast human power into a driveling nonentity—" I stopped. "I beg your pardon," I said slowly. "You must remember it is only my personal view of things—as likely to be wrong as right."

She took my hand, pressed it and signaled me to go. "I wish it were," she muttered, scarcely audible.

And I left her.

By the time I reached London I had cooled down. Obviously, neither of those two queer lives was my business. I decided to let them alone. Then it occurred to me that I had put in my satchel Hélène's photograph, given to me in pledge of friendship after our walk in the Luxembourg Gardens. "Better destroy it," said I to myself. But I didn't; I put it on the mantel-piece in my room.

The second day in London I met Rudolf in the street. He was coming out of a restaurant.

"Hello!" he exclaimed. "You left Paris?"

"I'm no ghost," said I.

"Come for a ride," he said, and almost hustled me into an automobile. "Now," he continued as we moved off, "let me tell you how I am. I can see you're all right."

"And you?"

"I'm going along very smoothly, very easily. I have no worries and no responsibilities except those that I seek. I make a few poor devils' lives more comfortable, and my own entirely so. In fact, De Charron, I have found the earthly Eldorado!"

I studied him. "Oh! Well, forgive me, but I don't think the climate's

altogether becoming. You look a trifle fagged."

He laughed. "You're talking as if I were a woman," he said.

I shrugged my shoulders. "Does it make much odds—in Eldorado?" I asked.

He sat for a few minutes with his face averted. "Is the Quarter looking well?" he inquired at last.

"Same as ever," said I.

"When do you go back?"

"Next week."

"I must write that book about it some day."

I laughed. "I wonder when you'll find time?"

"Time? Oh, when I want it. There's too much. It takes a lot of killing."

"It gets it," I said shortly.

I was glad to leave him. I admit that my own life is, for the most part, bound up in one place, but I had rather walk the main thoroughfare of one big city than have a private foot-path round the world. Rudolf irritated me. Yet that strange attraction of his made me accept his invitations, and I saw him nearly every day.

Once he said to me: "De Charron, did I ever tell you that the little elf girl thought I was a genius?"

"No, I think not," said I.

"Do you suppose she would be disappointed—now?"

"It depends, doesn't it? Which did she value—this 'world of men' or Eldorado?"

He bit his lip. "How should I know?" he said.

That was the morning before I left. I was to travel by night, and I came to my rooms about six o'clock to put my things together. The man told me that Mr. Lemoreau was waiting for me.

I ran upstairs and threw open the door, but the greeting died on my lips. Rudolf was standing in the middle of

the room, holding out a photograph at arm's length.

He heard me, and swung round with something like a shriek. "*Nom de Dieu*, man! Where did you get this?"

"Hélène Dussart gave it to me," I said.

He gasped. "B-but why did you never tell me you—knew her?"

"Because," I answered quietly, "some things are too big for a man to care to handle on his own responsibility. A human life is one."

He caught me by the shoulder. "'Rotten' you called it, this career of mine—didn't you? It is rotten. Where's that woman, De Charron?"

"In the Quartier Latin, *mon ami*, painting portraits—uncommonly well."

He put the photograph in his pocket. "That is the one thing I want to buy," he said.

"It is the one thing I won't sell," I responded. "But I will lend it to you—until you establish a better claim than I."

He took up his hat. "Tonight—nine-ten—Victoria."

"Tonight—nine-ten—Victoria," I repeated mechanically, and looked involuntarily toward the mantelpiece. But the fine, sweet face was not there—and I knew that, as it was that evening in my room, it was forever in my life.

I have come, since then, to agree with his wife. I think he's a genius—and there are others who think so, too. But he is not a millionaire. He gave away two-thirds of his money to people who needed it; and there were many who called it "waste of money" and, in conjunction with his marriage, "moral suicide." But he called it "going home."

And I? I did nothing for them—nothing. Still, I have admitted all along that I have no heart—and, I may add, no memories—to speak of.



"**M**ONEY is the root of all evil," and grafting doesn't improve the fruit.

# THE POET AND THE RUSTIC

By KITTY LOFTING AND EDMUND POLAND

"I WILL write an epic," said the Poet.

"He is so clever," murmured the Admiring Crowd.

The Poet absently bowed his acknowledgments and ran his fingers lightly through his wavy hair. It was a trick of his.

"Poetry of motion," whispered the Drawing-room Maidens who were part of the Crowd.

The Poet sighed and sauntered across the room to the Pianist of Distinction, who was holding forth upon the theory of music.

"You will play to me," he said to him dreamily, "and I shall be inspired."

The Pianist of Distinction looked slightly annoyed. Perhaps because he had been a Pianist of Distinction too long, and the interruption was inopportune. His only answer was to incline his head with its nimbus of hair and murmur: "The poetic muse inspires me not." He said it softly with a sad expression. The Drawing-room Maidens clasped their hands and whispered once more, "How beautiful!"

Possibly, had one asked them to explain exactly what was beautiful, they would not have been able to do so. In Art the vague and indefinite have an irresistible charm of their own. Moreover, they are so useful.

However, the Poet was not greatly concerned. "Tomorrow," he remarked to the Admiring Crowd, "I will go forth into the country and learn from Nature. Nature is a great teacher."

He said it as though it were an original remark, and as such the Admiring Crowd accepted it.

The Poet drank four cups of tea and ate a goodly portion of chocolate cake. Meanwhile he discoursed upon Art and cadences, the Modern Novel, Aubrey Beardsley and his own opinion of the inner meaning of Algernon Charles Swinburne.

He also accepted three invitations to dinner. One was at the Carlton. He finished his day with a visit to the Alhambra.

George Rumbold was a Rustic.

Rustics are generally supposed to be very unintelligent men. Their conversation is of turnips and the ale sold at "The Brown Cow"—unless it should happen to be "The Red Lion." Sometimes they speak of "the state of the markets." These are the Superior Rustics who have brothers in London. They even sometimes read a newspaper. We know these Rustics quite easily nowadays, because "Back to the Land" novelists and humorous short story writers have been very careful to explain the psychology of their characters to us.

The Rustic was leaning upon a fence listening to the song of a bird. His pipe had gone out, but he did not seem to notice it. Possibly he had not sufficient intelligence to keep his pipe alight and listen to a bird's song at the same time. Possibly he found he could pay more attention when he ceased to smoke.

The Poet came down the lane. Any one would have known him for a Poet at once. He was dressed in a Norfolk suit, and wore a turndown collar with a flowing tie. He also wore a very broad-brimmed hat and carried a thin cane.

Now as the Poet neared the fence upon which the Rustic leaned a curious thing happened. The bird stopped singing and flew away.

Possibly it thought itself unworthy to sing in the presence of the Poet. However that may be, it flew away, and the Rustic looked round for the cause of the sudden silence.

He touched his hat to the Poet.

"Can you tell me," asked that gentleman, "if I can obtain tea anywhere about here?"

"My cottage is only through the field yonder, if you would care to walk so far, sir," said the Rustic. He spoke in a pleasant manner, and did not get red or stand upon one leg, pulling his hair meanwhile. Neither did he say, "Zur." Truly an unusual Rustic.

Later the Poet found himself doing ample justice to a very excellent tea. It consisted of brown bread and butter, honey and strawberries and cream, and the tea was served in quite a pretty pot.

The Poet was vaguely troubled. He had a dim idea he should have been sitting down to a dish of ham and eggs and immense slices of bread and butter. Also there should have been an ancient inhabitant, who would endeavor to interest the Poet in the sins and adventures of a bygone age, of Gadfer Williams, Sam Slopps and Turnip Head Gregory, and others with curious patronymics.

None of these things took place. After tea, for which the Poet vainly tried to insist on payment, the Rustic showed his visitor the flowers that were growing in his garden.

He seemed very proud of a certain rosebush.

"Isn't it a picture!" he asked the Poet.

The latter smiled indulgently.

"Oh, yes, but there are far finer roses in London," he said. "You should see them, if ever you happen to go there. Regent Street—the large florist on the left hand side going down toward Piccadilly. Beautiful!"

"Ah!" said the Rustic. "But they

are in shops. Now these"—he fondled one lovingly, with a touch that was wonderfully light for so clumsy a hand—"these are growing. They may not be so beautiful, perhaps, as those you speak of, but these are alive, and sometimes they seem as though they knew me and tried to thank me for the care I take of them."

"Really!" observed the Poet, politely interested, and he lit an Egyptian cigarette.

"They try to thank me by growing more beautiful and giving out a sweeter perfume every day."

The Poet smiled approval of the sentiment. One butterfly chased another over and around the rosebush in sheer exuberance of happiness. The very movement of its exquisite wings as it settled upon a full-blown rose seemed to express the intensity of its abandon, its joy of living.

The Poet idly swished at it with his cane, and in doing so he broke the rose. It fell at his feet unnoticed.

"Ah, well, I must be going," the Poet remarked, courteously stifling a yawn.

The Carlton was exceptionally full for the time of year.

"Now this," said the Poet, looking at the Caviare au Blinis just put before him, "this is truly delightful."

"The caviare?" lisped the Insipid Person.

"No, no. The beauty of the rooms, the soft lights, the—the—" He waved his hand lightly with the well known gesture, and bowed to a Musical Comedy Actress seated at a near table. "I love London. The country is dead. There is no art, no feeling there, no—no—"

"Consomme Regence, sir?" interrupted the waiter.

"Ah!" remarked the Poet, as he resigned himself to his appetite. "Quite my favorite soup!"

In the Garden of the Rustic all the Flowers were sleeping save one dead Rose.

# ON CHARLATANISM

By CHARLES BATTELL LOOMIS

I SHALL never forget the shock it was to me to find that I was a charlatan.

I had moved about on this pleasant earth for upward of forty historic years without ever suspecting my sincerity, and then—

Earlier in life I had recognized myself in "Sentimental Tommy," but what writer or singer or actor or artist has not been willing to swear that Barrie must have peeped at his or her heart during sleep and used him as a model for that fascinating and odious hero of a charming book?

I was able to stand the shock the discovery that I was the original Sentimental Tommy gave me, because there was a certain titillation went with it. I felt myself romanticized. I was no longer an ordinary free lance, born in Brooklyn and never seeking to escape from it until my years of discretion were a reproach to me for not having left sooner. I was a something which, if set down with deft art in a book, even with all my shortcomings, would cause vaporish damsels to sigh and read me and recommend me to their friends and pester librarians for my well-thumbed pages. I felt that, if Barrie had been a little hard on me in spots, he had, on the whole, done well by me, and I thanked my stars that I had enough Scotch blood in my veins to make me eligible as a model for him. He had been to this country, and, although he had never met me, he had sensed me.

For weeks after reading that book I trod the earth with an extra lightness of step, wishing that the passers-by could read my thoughts, rather glad

that I was not merely handsome like some poor devils I knew, whose looks were their only asset.

For weeks afterward everything I wrote seemed to be glorified, and I wondered at the crass stupidity of editors in sending back stuff that would have added a much-needed distinction to their pages. I was also somewhat surprised that those of my friends who had read the book had not congratulated me on having served as Barrie's model.

If I had been fifteen or twenty years younger, and had been in love, I believe I should have out-Malvolioed Malvolio.

Yes, I felt that Barrie had been kind to me when he immortalized me in "Sentimental Tommy."

My first setback came when one of the dullest, most hack-writing of mortals who ever pushed a plodding pen over innocent paper confided to me one night over some very ordinary wine (anything *but* French) that he didn't know how the devil it had happened, but he believed that Barrie must either have met him or else knew some intimate friend of his, because in "Sentimental Tommy" he had plumbed his nethermost depths.

"What conceit!" thought I. But I said not a word.

It was an unsuccessful artist who next unbosomed himself to me. He was a pleasant enough fellow, and I think there was more in his art than the public saw, but living in one room on the top floor of a badly lighted boarding house, and eating uninteresting meals whenever he was forced to by hunger and allowed to by the state

of his purse, it would never have occurred to me that he had anything in his make-up of the Sentimental Tommy order.

But there he was, telling me that he might have sat as a model for that wizard of a Barrie. "I'm half angry at it," said he, "because my foibles are all there, too."

He was not fool enough to think that Barrie had seen him in the flesh. He realized that there was such a thing as divination, but I began to get a glimmer of a new idea; perhaps I was not quite so extraordinary as I had supposed myself to be. There might be other pebbles on the beach very like myself.

After that the confessions came whenever I called them forth by carefully careless questioning. Dozens of men and not a few women—if I may be believed—have told me that Barrie made pretty good use of his brief trip to this country, because he had fashioned his most enduring figure out of their component parts.

I no longer think that the public will be interested in my every fleeting thought, nor do my actions hold a glamour even for me, for I realize that we who make bread and butter out of our emotions are all Sentimental Tommies, and that most of what we say and do is sentimental Tommyrot; that Tommy is an eternal type, and that, like Wordsworth concerning Shakespeare, any one of us could have written Barrie's book—"if we had had the mind to."

But it may be remembered by some that I started out to speak of charlatanism and the shock that racked me when I realized that I had been "discovered."

The book was by George Gissing, of whose work I had heard much in commendation. I began to read him with the feeling that his books were a little above the appreciation of the ordinary herd, and with mental pattings on the back that I had been able to lift myself by my own bootstraps quite a distance above that same sordid herd that was battenning on the moor.

But when Gissing proceeded to prove without any shadow of a doubt that I was a rank charlatan, when he drew a convincing figure of a man whom he called a charlatan, and that figure walked and acted as I did—I shut the book, as one would shut from view a crystal that was showing the gazer too much of his own life.

I felt like going about and warning my friends against myself. There was nothing I did for the next six weeks that could bear the brunt of my own scrutiny. If I lent a hand to a poor devil, I knew full well that George Gissing would have known why I did it.

Not a straight, unadulterated motive did I have for anything I did. Every motive was mixed, and the mixture was four fifths base alloy to one part mere twelve-karat gold.

Kindly words died on my lips, because I felt sure that the man to whom I addressed them would question their sincerity. I kept away from my publishers when they were launching a book of mine, for fear that I should say something that would help boom it; and I depreciated the book to those of my friends who asked me about it until one turned on me and said: "You've got a touch of the charlatan in you, old chap. You know that the only reason you run that book down is so that I may say something nice about it and perhaps buy it. Well, I *have* bought it, and it's rotten, and you ought to know that what you have said about it is what you really think, while hoping that those to whom you talk may think the opposite. You are capable of better work, old man, and you ought to be sincere."

This, of course, was from an old friend. No enemy ever says the savage things that ripple from the tongue of a friend.

But there I was proved inside and out a charlatan!

I lost my appetite. I lost my interest in books and plays and men and life generally.

I was glad Gissing had died so that he could not go on showing me up any more.

Then Kipling's "black thought" came to me, and I knew that I had written my last word—that henceforth I must make my living by the sweat of the *outside* of my brow, and that the end was mercifully drawing near.

But one day at lunch I met a friend whom I had not seen for years. I had known him and loved him at school. His every look was sincerity; the clasp of his hand gave you heart; the ring of his voice made you feel that life was always worth living.

He had turned to medicine and had made a name for himself, not only as a practitioner and as a writer of notable books on medical science, but as a man. Not a doctor who knew him but had a good word for his manly sincerity, his "thereness"; not a casual acquaintance but felt he was made of bell metal that could never ring false.

And the day I met him he told me with a wry face that he would like to wring the neck of an unknown writer whose book he had just been reading.

His wife had got it out of the library and he had picked it up one sleepless night.

"Gilsing—George Gilsing. Guess he's an Englishman, as the book was published in London. He's so damned true that I can never forgive him. Ever read the book, 'The Charlatan'?"

"Gissing," said I, "George Gissing—the man's dead. Notable writer. Yes, I *began* it. Didn't think much of it"—and I had thought of it day and night!

"Didn't you? Well, I did. I couldn't help it, because it was as sincere as I am false. Man, do you know that I'm a charlatan by that book?"

My spirits rose like a lark on a brave spring morning. I was ready to begin life again.

I held out my hand across the table and said:

"Never mind, old man. I guess you dignify the company of charlatans. We're all in the same boat, God help us! Shake!"



## THE RANDYVOO

By ARTHUR STRINGER

**W**E see thim thrailin' in and out wid niver wanst a shmile  
 At Fairy Thorn or buddin' May that's scentin' many a mile;  
 I see thim streelin' in and out wid salt tears on their face,  
 For yon's the Acre av the Dead and thought a dourish place,  
 Wid gravestones thick as barley tops and yews forninst the wall,  
 Where skylarks soar and sing so mad, and matin' cuckoos call.

And dark it is, in faith, to thim who hold the place in dread,  
 And dour enough it still may be for thim who know their dead;  
 But, och, for me 'tis still the home av iv'ry singin' lark  
 And iv'ry note and hawthorn scent that steals across the dark;  
*For wanst, where black between the stones the yew tree shadows hung,  
 I found and knew me first love's kiss, whin all the world was young.*



# THE MAN WITH THE UGLY HANDS

By FRANK H. SHAW

SIR GEORGE LAYNCOURT shuddered strongly and turned his eyes away from their fascinated regard of the hands opposite him. He glanced determinedly out of the window of the speeding train, but within five seconds by the elaborate gold watch in his pocket he was staring at them again, unable to tear his glance away. They were not the kind of hands one associates with first class carriages on the Great Southern Railway. Perhaps it was that fact which caused the Judge's heart to throb excitedly. The more he looked the more astonished he grew. He shifted his seat, but the hands occupied the whole field of his vision.

"It's absurd and quite idiotic," he murmured to himself, as he doggedly drew a magazine from his pocket and composed himself to read. Before he had read the title of the first story and the author's name he was staring again at the hands, staring with a queer catch in his breath.

"I won't look at them," he said. "I'll read. No, I won't; I'll look out of the window." He fixed his eyes on the flying landscape, marked how the snowdrifts were piled in fleecy solidity against the embankment, marked how the vast expanse of country was shrouded under a blanket of purity and cold, marked—marked that the hands were still gripping the edges of the big, wide opened newspaper.

And such hands! The fingers and lower knuckles alone were visible, but they were the fingers and knuckles of a laborer. Thick at the tips, the nails broken and stained horribly, here and

there a great half-healed scab, coarse hair growing up half their length, and evidenced in every single digit a fearful strength. The fingers gripped the paper's edges so tightly that the knuckles were white and strained-looking. Sir George felt, for one unpleasant moment, as if he were witnessing a tragedy. Just so might a man's hands close about the throat of a helpless victim, so that the strained muscles knotted and hardened. Why wouldn't the fellow, whoever he was, shift those ugly members and allow his only companion in the carriage some rest from the loathly sight? His Honor, Judge Layncourt, began to feel within him the stirrings of a petty spite. If only the fellow would lower the paper and give him a glimpse of his face! If only he would go to sleep! If only— Pah! There were a dozen "if onlys."

The man's clothing—Sir George could see only the lower parts of his trousers, from the knees downward—was not at all in keeping with his hands—far from it. The garment in question and in sight was of a fine texture, evidently the work of a good tailor. New, too—the virgin gloss of the cloth was not vanished; the crease was as set and sharp as a steel bar. Superexcellent cloth—and those hands! It was an enigma—something altogether strange. More than likely the man was some ruffian or other, who had robbed the proprietor of those garments and thus equipped himself beyond his station.

But the boots—they were the boots of a gentleman, too. They fitted well.

Men often gave themselves away by their boots, reflected the Judge, who prided himself on being something of an expert in delineating character. Yes, the fellow was well bred, and, what was more, he was smoking an uncommonly good cigar—better than Sir George could afford to smoke. Reckoning up everything, work-soiled hands, good clothing and well-fitting boots, topping the whole with the quality of that cigar, the man sat there confessed either as a freak of nature or—or— The Judge licked dry lips. And as he dropped his eyes to the floor, the paper rustled and fell.

"This is what one might call a purely fortuitous meeting," said the owner of the hands gently. "I was going to see you in any case, Mr.— Let me see, it is Sir George now, isn't it?" The Judge gave a queer shudder. There was something weirdly fascinating in the voice. Where had he heard it before? Long ago, it was, but there was no mistaking that gentle listlessness behind which there seemed to ring the note of tempered steel. With a tremendous effort Layncourt lifted his eyes to the face of his *vis-à-vis*. And then he peered at him keenly, striving to resurrect his connection with something in the past. The man's face was vaguely familiar, and yet—it was undoubtedly the face of a stranger. The trim beard, turning gray, the hair, thin at the temples, and snow white in places, these were common to any man who has passed the meridian of life. But—the harsh lines on the face, the furrowed brow, the pallor of the skin, the dogged set of the mouth and, below everything—dimly to be seen, yet painfully evident—the look of one who has endured great suffering and faced unending privation and woe. It was a strange face. The nose was the nose of a gentleman; the eyes, keenly gray, were intelligent eyes, but the sadness in their depths was pitiful to witness. Also, the beginnings of a smile were dawning in their depths—and the smile made Layncourt turn cold and tremble.

"I don't think I know you," he said nervously. "So many people know me

whom I can't place, you see. Your name is—"

"My name is Gerald Glaynford," said the man with the hands grimly. "Remember it?"

"Gerald Glaynford! My God!" The Judge's voice barely rose above a whisper, but it thrilled through the carriage like a snake's hiss; rose above the clatter and rumble of speeding wheels, even above the surge and whistle of the wind outside. "Gerald Glaynford! My God!" He cast the look of a hunted hare about him, at the roof, at the window; the communication cord was outside, and the window tightly closed. Also, Glaynford was between him and the side of the carriage whereon the cord was placed.

"You didn't expect me so soon, I see," said the man with the ugly hands. "Probably you'd forgotten that a man's sentence is shortened considerably for good behavior. I behaved well—I had a reason. That reason: to seek you out, and let you taste the fear of death before you tasted death itself. Now, we can talk." He laid the newspaper down carefully, folding it with some deliberation, threw his cigar to the floor and lifted his drooping eyelids, so that his gray eyes struck shafts of terror deep down into the Judge's writhing soul.

"Yes, I'm Gerald Glaynford—*was* Gerald Glaynford, rather. I'm No. 303 in most men's minds today. They don't remember names at Dartmoor—perhaps that's why you sent me there. Man, man, if there's a God in Heaven—and I doubted it until this minute—He's given you into my hands this day. No, don't stir. I'm between the cord and yourself, as you've noticed. And—" The hands clutched on themselves convulsively; the man's face was distorted with rage.

"I've prayed for some such meeting as this," went on Glaynford, when the paroxysm was past. "Prayed without hoping, and here I've been answered beyond my wildest dreams. The train won't stop for an hour; one can say—and do—a lot in sixty minutes.

"I'm going to do both. Sit still." There came a rasp into his voice, and Sir George writhed back to his old position.

"What do you want with me?" he asked sullenly. "I've no dealings with ticket-of-leave men."

"No, but this ticket-of-leave man has dealings with you, my—my rival, say. For that's what you were in the past times, if I remember rightly. Sixteen years ago—I was twenty-nine then, and you were forty—the youngest judge on the bench. Sixteen years ago—by Jove! A lot can happen in sixteen years. A man can go down into the nether hell and endure such torments as even Dante never dreamed of. A man can change from a mild, gentle dreamer into a hard, merciless avenger. There's no end to the happenings possible in sixteen years. We'll talk about sixteen years ago if you don't mind, Layncourt."

Some weird compound of malice, hatred and fear sported at will across the Judge's livid face; his dry tongue was in constant requisition to moisten the drier lips.

"You've got me at your mercy," he cried with a hysterical shriek. "Damn you! What do you intend to do?"

"That remains to be seen. First, however, I'm going to recapitulate the past—the past that you'd forgotten, Layncourt. Sixteen years ago—I was a lad then, comparatively, and all the world was before me. I'd youth and hope and—and love. Now—I've got the ruins of a life; I've got a burden of shame to bear; I'm shunned by every solitary person who isn't a criminal. And—I'm alone in all the world. Yes, I know, I know what the years brought you. They brought you a wife; they brought you fame; they brought you everything the world counts dear. Me they brought sickness and ignominy, toil and the biting of chill iron into my hardened soul. Something of a contrast, eh?"

The train rumbled on noisily; the wind gathered itself together and hurled upon the speeding carriages like a ravaging monster. Glaynford braced

his shoulders and sat erect, confident, the master of the situation.

"I'm giving you sixty minutes of agony," he went on. "It's small return for my sixteen years of death in life. To resume:

"You knew from the very beginning of things that I was innocent, didn't you? Ah, you needn't start to deny; I can see the lie trembling on your lips. Strange things happen at Dartmoor, Layncourt. Such things, for instance, as men meeting other men. Oh, no; talking isn't allowed, but still it's done. I met a man there, and he knew a good deal about the Rushingholme murder, for which I was sentenced to penal servitude for life. That's touched you on the raw, has it? I thought it would.

"Yes, this man knew a lot about it. He couldn't come forward and give evidence; he was engaged in burgling a house—'cracking a crib' he called it—at the time; he'd have been questioned as to his whereabouts and he'd have been exposed. Self-preservation's the first law of nature, Layncourt; he kept silent. But he told me who it was that murdered General Leatherwood."

Sir George stirred restlessly in his seat; his hands were twitching strangely. Once he lifted shivering fingers to his collar that had grown suddenly tight.

"It was Michael Garside, Layncourt, who murdered General Leatherwood. You believe that, I know. And you knew it sixteen years ago—sixteen years ago, my God! But the circumstantial evidence was strong against me. They arrested me; they brought me before a magistrate's court and proved me guilty and remanded me to the Assizes, on the strength of circumstantial evidence. You'll remember that. And the judge of Assize was George Layncourt, the youngest judge in England.

"Yes, you tried me, and you summed up the evidence and addressed the jury, men who were moved by your marvelous elocution so that they could see neither right nor wrong. You

swayed them like reeds in the wind; you laid such tremendous stress on my suspicious connection with the crime that they thought as you'd have them think. I'd been heard to threaten the General; I'd been seen in the vicinity immediately before the crime; a search had revealed a coat of mine all blood stained. It was a black case against the prisoner at the bar, Layncourt. You made it blacker—you'd always been a powerful speaker, whether for the prosecution or the defense. And you knew, even when you were sentencing me to penal servitude for life—even you daren't go against the recommendation to mercy the jury besought—you knew then that Michael Garside killed the man. I've had sixteen years to think it out; I've done little else but think—and work. I had a reason for working; I wanted to develop my flaccid muscles, in case—in case they might serve me well later.

"I suppose there never was a case where a young and popular judge lived beyond his means; kept a stable of race horses on the sly; generally lived his life, and came under deep obligations to Michael Garside. Of course, if there had been such a judge, Layncourt, he'd have seen it was his own salvation to keep silent about what he knew—even though he'd been practically a witness of the crime, eh? The arrest and trial of Garside might have meant that much would have come to light, much that would have seriously compromised a rising judge who—who was a bachelor, and didn't want to remain a bachelor all his life. It's circumstantial, Layncourt, a lot of this evidence, but you have sentenced a man to penal servitude for life on the strength of circumstantial evidence before this. And it fits in well, Layncourt; it fits in closely, like a neat dovetail, leaving no signs of overlapping.

"So, after I heard what my informant—he was No. 4176—had to say on the matter, I used to lie awake o' nights putting things together. It's wonderful, Layncourt, how you can think with your eyes fixed on a purple-

black patch of sky, crossed by iron bars. It brings clarity of thought; things that were dark grow clear—very clear. I used to spend hours in thinking; the only sound to mar the smooth trend of the mind's workings was the tramp of warders' feet in the corridors outside. And gradually I reconstructed the entire thing from beginning to end—as follows:

"I was in your way from the very first. Joyce Staincliffe—what, man, that's hit you hard, has it?—was a sweet girl and a beautiful girl; she'd have graced the table of an eminent judge. But she seemed to fancy another man, one who wasn't famous, a man who'd done nothing in the world save spend his inheritance as well as he could and try to keep clean. He was something of a dreamer, this man. He believed in love, woman's love and man's. He thought it was the most vital element in the whole wide world, Layncourt. Perhaps he was wrong; I'm sure he was wrong. There's one stronger force—revenge.

"Well, as I was saying, I was in your way. You thought if I could be removed the path would open out clearly before you. And then Fate—the grimmost practical joker of all the ages—chanced to give you this lead. They brought me before you; you knew I was as innocent as an unborn babe, and yet, knowing it all, you deliberately and with malice aforethought—do you remember those words? I do—urged the thick-headed jury to return a verdict of willful murder against me, who'd never harmed a living man in all my life. Oh, it's a long, slow story, but I'm coming to a finish soon. Let's see." He took out a heavy gold watch—against his sorry fingers it looked fantastic—and consulted it.

"We're due at Seven Groves at six-thirty-five, and it's only six yet, Layncourt. Thirty-five minutes yet in which to finish the story and the work as well. I'll get on.

"Didn't you feel a single stirring of pity in your bosom when you saw your plans work out so comfortably? Didn't you for one minute think that

I had a soul to be saved? Didn't you think that that soul might be turned into a savage, iron-hard soul, impregnated from one end to the other with malice and revenge? You should have looked a little further ahead, Layncourt, you, a far-seeing man. Why, sixteen years is nothing. It's a mere breath, a second, as seconds are reckoned in eternity. But sixteen years is long enough to shatter the health and break the spirit of a man who wasn't a physical giant. I suppose you were so busy thinking the prison life would kill me that you hadn't room for such a thought as that I might survive the ordeal and live to demand an explanation.

"But I'm digressing a little. One word of what you knew would have saved me. Nay, you could have used your eloquence on the side of mercy and secured an acquittal if you'd wished. You needn't have brought Garside into the matter at all. You could have saved your own reputation quite easily, and not a breath of suspicion would have attached to your name. But still, there was always the chance of the police seeking further evidence if I'd been acquitted, and Garside might have come under suspicion, and then—then your hidden life might have come to light. And that would have been ruin, eh? But I wouldn't have blamed you so much for that. Self-preservation's the first law, as I said before; only, to use my appearance before you as a means to securing the love of Joyce Staincliffe—Layncourt, that was grisly; it was shabby; it was vile.

"Of course, I'm able to see your ideas quite clearly; that patch of purple sky crossed by bars helped me. If I'd been acquitted, set free, there'd have been something of the martyr's attractiveness about me, and Joyce Staincliffe might have decided that the least she could do was to marry me, as something of a recompense for what I'd suffered. And that wouldn't have suited your book at all, would it? No; you wanted her, and I was the only man you feared in all the wide world.

I didn't know all this at the trial, and I had a silly notion that it would have been bad form to bring a woman's name into the thing; so even what little I did suspect had to be kept down, hidden in my heart. So I said nothing, and you said, 'Guilty,' and that's about all the thing, so far as I'm acquainted with it. You saved yourself from exposure; you managed to get your debts to Garside canceled; you were the only man left in the running for Joyce Staincliffe, and so all things worked together for your good. You only forgot to allow for the unreckoned factor: the poor devil who was paying the price for all this; the man who was becoming a mere machine, cursed by villainous warders, lashed to toil, persecuted by spiteful officials, a man who had no name—No. 303.

"The work was hard, Layncourt; the head warden took a spite against me and accused me of malingering, when I was really ill—ill, body and soul, heartbroken. Quarrying rocks, making roads, manual labor of that kind wasn't what I'd been accustomed to in my time. I had ten thousand a year of my own—have it still, for that matter. I fell sick—very sick, and wanted to die, but death wouldn't come. And then afterward, when the iron had bitten very deeply into my soul, I wanted to live; I just had to live until I'd paid my debt. I prayed for life, Layncourt—and the prayer was answered. Nay, it was more than answered, for with returning health came a desire for hard work; I wanted to harden my muscles and get myself fit in every way in case—just in case such an opportunity as this ever offered. I meant it to offer, to force Fate's hand. I've ten thousand a year, I told you; I'd determined to spend every penny of it in your ruin. I could have done it, too, but this offers a better way.

"I'd no thought, when I joined this train at Sedgeford, that we'd pick you up at Lowmoor. Evidently the divine justice is fairer than man's—than some men's, anyhow. God has willed that

I should meet you opportunely; you're convicted by the Eternal. I'm not sentimental, but it makes a man think he's got right on his own side. You killed a man's soul, his faith in humanity. I'm going to— Never mind that yet a while.

"I got well again, and I worked gladly now. The clean air of Dartmoor, the active exertion, the simple strenuousness of it, all made a new man of me. I grew broad and erect; I felt my strength come upon me in waves; I, who had been a weakling, became something of a giant, as you see. You cannot fail to mark the change in me. Look at this!"—he tapped his swelling chest. "Look at this"—he touched the snow-white hair at his temples. "Look at these"—he spread out his gnarled and toil-worn hands before the Judge's fascinated eyes.

"It's taken sixteen years to do it all, Layncourt, but it's done at last—well done. As well done as your work was; better, perhaps. You've grown sleek and prosperous in all those years, my friend. You look what you undoubtedly are: a respected citizen, affluent, all things to all men. To some you are, no doubt, an eminently successful justice; to me you're simply a murderer, for, though you've never taken a human life in all probability, you've done worse; you've destroyed a young man's soul—mine. And now the time has come for the reckoning. The man without a soul is face to face with the man without a heart. It's a bit of poetic justice, isn't it, Layncourt, my esteemed and fair-minded dispenser of justice?"

"I heard you married Joyce. Did she ever have any hint of the truth, I wonder? Poor Joyce! She wasn't one of the kind to be true through an eternity of misunderstanding. She was just a simple-minded girl, one who would have surrendered her whole life into my keeping; one who'd have given me love for love. I was about to speak to her on that very day I was arrested; the dreamer in me forbade me from speaking before. I wasn't sure that I

was worthy of a good woman's love—of Joyce's. And then, before I could speak, I was branded a murderer in the world's sight. I suppose the poor girl thought she had won a happy release, if ever she thought about it at all. Poor Joyce! How is she, by the way?"

"She's dead—twelve years since." The words were torn from the Judge's parched throat; they came through his lips as a man's soul might speed in the moment of painful dissolution. Sweat stood out in great beads on Layncourt's broad, furrowed forehead. He trembled; his face worked spasmodically.

"Dead! My God! Poor Joyce, poor Joyce—and yet, is she to be pitied? How did she die? You owe me that slight comfort, anyhow. Wait a little, though, Layncourt—the time's passing fast, and I've got some work to do. Still, it doesn't matter so much. Better not to know how she died; it would only add to the agony. D'you see these hands?"

There was no escaping them. Gnarled and knotted, they clenched and unclenched spasmodically before the Judge's bewitched eyes. They opened wide and slowly ground together, as if clutching at something—say at a man's throat. The Judge made an inarticulate sound. He was a man who loved life very dearly. With some few exceptions it was a pleasant thing; it held adulation and praise, some little envy on the part of less successful contemporaries, men who had been overtaken and passed on the road. And yet—those hands were strong and capable hands, muscular, from the swell of the lower parts of the fingers it was easy to see that they could take and hold a viselike grip. Merciless hands, thought Layncourt, with a sick shudder that shook him on his seat.

"What are you going to do?" asked the Judge breathlessly, as the hands writhed and twisted before him.

"Do? I'm going to kill you, you—murderer! Those hands—the hallmark of my shame and degradation—

are going to tear out your lying throat and crush back your vile breath. But I'm not going to kill you yet. We've ten good minutes before us; you're going to sit and think about all you've done in your unlovely life, and you're going to die a hundred deaths in anticipation for the one living death you made me die." A fleck of foam showed at Glaynford's mouth; his eyes shone remorselessly. Outwardly he was an embodiment of the justice which the Judge had used to his own fell ends. Inwardly the returned convict was upborne on wings of exhilaration. He said that his intended deed was all just, well deserved.

"Would it—would it do any good if—if I cleared your name before men?" stammered Layncourt huskily, fighting for time. "I could do it. I confess to it all, Glaynford. I convicted you to clear my path. You've reckoned up the matter wonderfully well—you ought to have been a lawyer—and I'm cornered at all points. But a word from me in the right place, and you'd be cleared of all suspicion. You could take up your life where it left off; you could walk unsullied in the eyes of the world. Give me a chance, Glaynford, give me a chance."

"The sort of chance you gave me, eh?" The reply was cold and very grim. "What good would your confession do me—if you meant to confess? Besides, I know you better than you know yourself. You'd get clear if you could, and then as soon as we reached the first stopping place you'd give me in charge for uttering threats. They'd find I was a ticket of leave, and you'd swear—you aren't overtruthful, you know—that I was simply acting out of a vengeful feeling—which I am. No, no, my friend. I've got you—a heaven-sent meeting, by Jove!—and I don't intend to let you go. Sit still, man, and think of all the devil's work you've done in your time. Think of sixteen years in slavery, as I've been in slavery, and let that help you to meet your fate like a man. I'm soulless, am I? Yes, but I had a clean, honest soul once. You killed it. My

God, it's just! A vision from the grave risen up to demand from you a life for a life! And I'll take it too."

Sir George stirred on his seat, and a glitter came into his eyes. He measured the man before him, eyed him up and down. A sudden spring, a sure blow—though verging on sixty the Judge was still muscular—a telling blow on the outstretched chin, and it might be possible to win through yet. One blow, a dash to the communication cord—why the devil didn't this company have their communication cords inside the carriage as all the other companies did?—time to pull it and give an alarm, that was all he craved.

"Don't try to spring," said Glaynford's voice coolly. "I'm a bit of a thought reader, Layncourt. I recognize your intention. See my hands—they've been trained to resist just such an attack as you meditate. Sit still, I tell you!" He half rose, and his face was stern and white.

Sir George subsided, quaking terribly. He was seeing visions, for the face before him bred such visions. He remembered it very distinctly now, remembered it as it had been sixteen years before, firm and confident, flushed with the glow of innocence, resolute. Remembered it as it had been later, white and strained, horror-struck, with a slaughtered soul striving from the dimming eyes. That was when he had pronounced the verdict, he reflected.

He remembered other things. He had visited great prisons, and had watched the toil and misery of those doomed to servitude. He had been witness to much dumb suffering—and the man before him must have suffered keener agonies even than those recognized felons, for Glaynford was a refined man, an innocent man. He remembered something else, too, and remembering it, was about to speak.

"Time's up," said Glaynford coolly. "Now, Layncourt, you've had your chance. As you die think of what you've done—and may it speed your passing. You'll be avenged, perhaps.



They'll take me and hang me for this, but in God's sight I'm justified, and I don't care. You offered to reinstate me among mankind; what do I care for that? I've lived in hell too many years to care one whit what my next-door neighbor thinks of me. You talk of compensation from the Government for illegal imprisonment; I've got more money than ever I can spend. I've learned how to live simply at Dartmoor; it's an easily acquired habit when you're compelled to it. You'd better say a prayer, if you're a praying man, for you're going before God's throne—do you understand?—to give an account of your stewardship."

His face was very terrible now, but not so terrible as the clenching and unclenching of the awful, misshapen hands. Try as he would, Sir George could not withdraw his eyes from them; they were everywhere, dominating the entire outlook. The whirling snowflakes outside seemed to reach out grasping, evil fingers, thick and blunted at the ends; the very howl of the wind was such as a man's last breath might shriek. But—the Judge's thoughts were very busy.

"I ask you for one moment," he said with forced calm. "I don't deserve it; after I have spoken, do as you will. The law of the land will deem it murder; your innocence will never be proved. I see you care nothing for that. But—I have something to say in my defense. Will you hear me?"

"Get on, man, get on!" came the impatient response. "Time's short!" Glaynford was marking the spot on the Judge's throat where he would take his first grip. He sighed with quiet satisfaction. The sixteen years' sowing had brought this goodly harvest at all events.

"I married Joyce Staincliffe," Sir George was saying dully. "I won her fairly—as I said then. All was fair in love, ran my thoughts, and—I won her. But I've suffered, too, Glaynford. Yes, you talk glibly enough about your woes and sorrows; no doubt they've been bitter, heavy to bear." His voice

had lost its faltering now; it was resonant, almost thrilling. The returned convict eyed him closely; this was something approaching the semblance of a man.

"You in Dartmoor, I in my own home—we've both suffered; but—you need not believe me, but it's true—I'd willingly have changed my lot for yours. Hush! Don't speak! This isn't silly sentiment. I'm not going to say that the consciousness of guilt, the knowledge that I sent an innocent man to a living grave, has rendered my life unbearable. I overlooked the cause; I could not overlook the effect. My sorrow has been harder to bear than the vilest ignominy ever thrust upon you. I married Joyce Staincliffe, and—and—" His voice faltered now. Something misty sprang up before his eyes; something dropped down his cheek.

"And—all the time she was with me, Glaynford, three short years, I saw her miserable. Do you understand it? She hated me. She'd loved you. She'd tied herself to me because of her loneliness, because of my importunity. And it was my lot to sit by and see the suffering of her—of Joyce Staincliffe. Can you think, you who talk of living deaths—can you think what that meant? To sit by and see the one woman eaten with sorrow; to watch her fade with each and every day; to be unable to put one's finger on the evil; to feel that all the skill and knowledge in the world could not check the waning life or restore the vanished happiness? That was my share, Glaynford—my bitter, bitter share."

The voice died away brokenly, and Glaynford waited, breathless, a queer new light in his eyes.

"Go on," he said at length. "You've more to tell. Why should you suffer in her sorrow?"

"Because I loved her." There was dignity in the simple assertion. The man seemed almost glorified. Treacherously he had worked to gain his end; cunningly he had plotted; he had sent an innocent man knowingly to what

was worse than death; but now the manhood of him came to the surface, bidden into revelation by reason of his love and his suffering.

"Can't you realize it now?" he cried, his voice ringing clearly. "I'd have given my soul's welfare to serve her. I sold my soul to the devil for her sake, for I was an honorable man before—the temptation came. I bartered my peace for her possession, and—when I won her I found I'd got only the dry shell; the heart and spirit of her were gone. She loathed me—and I had to sit by in silence and endure. And I loved her; better than you, Glaynford, better than you, for there was nothing I'd have left undone, no crime I'd have left uncommitted for her, and to win her for myself. Not a weak and selfish love, Glaynford—I wanted her happiness, my God!—but a strong, passionate, hungry love—that was my love for Joyce Staincliffe. Loving her as I did, I destroyed her—that was my reward. Now speak; have I paid the price?"

Glaynford's mouth was working; the new light in his eyes made the Judge shrink back on his seat. For he had taken that light for mercy's gleam, and it was—he shuddered pitifully—it was the gleam of growing madness. Sixteen years before such an appeal might have softened the heart of the man who had suffered for another's sin; now the iron of his hopeless captivity had eaten into Glaynford's soul, and there was no mercy there. For a man may not toil for year after chain-galled year, and retain his youthful chivalry and high ideals. No man can feel the degradation of the prisoning bonds and stand forth at the close of weary years as simple in heart as when the fetters first closed on wrist and ankle. The Judge's appeal had stirred unusual currents in his victim's being, but they were unholy currents now. A man warped from the semblance of a man by shame and torture stood before him, not a gentleman of reason and kindly feeling.

"You loved her—you hound!" The

cry came with the yelp of a dog. "You dare call your filthy passion love? Yes, I'll grant you it was love, as you know it. But—not my kind of love, not my kind of love. I might talk to you for a year, Layncourt, and find matter worth the hearing, too, but I'd never convince you that you were nothing but a hidebound criminal. You loved her!" The laugh that rang out above the thunder of the wheels was awful in its mockery.

"For God's sake don't grovel in that fashion! You loved her, you say? Then why didn't you give her her freedom? Why didn't you drown yourself? No, you wouldn't have the pluck for that. Why didn't you take an overdose of chloral, or something of the sort? Love—love seeks its highest fulfillment in the happiness of the one loved. Joyce's misery never touched your heart, you coward! Why didn't you leave a confession behind, saying that I was unjustly accused, and then pass out of this world as gracefully as you could? You'd have done it gracefully, trust George Layncourt for that." The Judge writhed again at the bitterness of the sneer.

"It wouldn't have been much to do, Layncourt. You say you sold your soul to get her, but you weren't ready to sell your idle, pampered body to give her the happiness you'd robbed her of, were you? No; you might win pity from a sentimental British jury—honest shopkeepers all—by such a plea, but you win no mercy from me. God! To think of Joyce being unhappy! For God's sake—what do you think you're up against, you fool? You couldn't have struck a note that would have killed mercy sooner. Joyce unhappy? My God! And the one tiny dash of happiness I knew during all those years was the thought that perhaps the woman I loved had been taught to forget. And she hadn't! She remembered; because of her misery she'd remember all the more. No, you hound, you don't!" His mighty hands reached out and dragged the panic-stricken man down to the seat again. Sir George had made a

desperate leap and clutch at the communication cord.

"You've sinned, and you'll pay the price. Almost I'm inclined to torture you, you—flabby apology for a man! And we thought you a gentleman once!" He held the struggling man easily with one hand. Sir George himself was responsible for the almost superhuman tenaciousness of the distorted fingers, and the thought shot through his humming brain that had Glaynford remained as he was in the past, the struggle would have been more nearly equal. The irony of it all burnt an insistent way into his thoughts; he had forged the instrument that made for his death. His callous scheming had toughened the muscles and hardened the fingers that ground a painful way into his flesh. He bit back a scream that trembled on his lips, and his heart beat in suffocating throbs.

"I think I'll kill you now," grated Glaynford savagely. "Slowly, yes, slowly. Ha, ha! And as you die, you hound, I'll tell you all that you've done to deserve your fate. Damn it all, I might have been moved to pity by seeing your cowardice, but—Joyce's unhappiness was the last straw. Hold back, I tell you!" But for one moment a strength equal to that of his captor's came to the Judge, the mad strength of abject fear. He threw aside the detaining clasp on his wrists and spurned Glaynford as if he were a child. Then, panting hard, he dashed his fist through the glass of the window and yelled. He was picked up like a toy and flung back. When he opened his eyes at the awful menace of his opponent's heated breath on his cheek, Glaynford's eyes were red-rimmed and burning; foam clung to his lips. The ugly hands opened and closed in a fashion that chilled the doomed man's blood. Though he tried again to shriek, his throat was parched

and constricted; no sound would come.

"You'd sell your soul for her, would you?" hissed the ex-convict. "My soul's already sold—I bartered it in that living hell, seeking forgetfulness. But if such a useless thing as a soul can be sold twice I'll sell it again. Now, Joyce Staincliffe loved me, and you killed me. Joyce Staincliffe died because of her love for me. That makes you writhe! Joyce Staincliffe knew you for what you were, and if there's a God in Heaven let Him judge between you and me! Joyce Stain—" The fingers were closing about the throat of the prostrate man. Glaynford chuckled in an evil fashion. Sir George's eyes protruded; his face grew purple. . . .

There was a horrid screeching of suddenly applied brakes, a scream of tortured metal. Somewhere, far away, a man shrieked in a voice that sounded like nothing human. Then followed a crash, the rending of wood, the hiss of steam, a loud explosion.

The walls of the compartment closed in upon the struggling pair; closed in with amazing swiftness. They were flung mercilessly from the seat to the floor; heavy metal fell upon them. Two screams merged into one; but they were unnoticed in the confusion. The express had collided head-on with a goods train, and the three front carriages were telescoped flat. Not a single soul lived in that ghastly pile of wreckage.

When the wrecking gang cleared away the piled debris they came upon two twisted, crushed bodies, lying in each other's arms. On the unharmed face of one man was an expression of livid, awful fear; on the unharmed face of the other some men read serene triumph. In all probability God had made His judgment, and taken the payment of the debt out of Glaynford's ugly hands.



# AT THE SIGN OF THE THISTLE

By MABLE HOLMES PARSONS

WHEN we arrived the tables were already nearly filled—three long rows of tables, palm-screened and almost invariably set for two. Occasional couples were still coming, however, and as they entered at the heavy, glistening glass doors they would stand looking in vain toward especially coveted places. We ourselves experienced a regret that we had not come sufficiently early to secure seats by the side walls, their peculiar advantage being that, ranged thus out of the regular cross track of glances, we could see and escape having our seeing seen.

You can't go to the Sign of the Thistle and not know the impulse to look and look. Everything within the dull-colored, smoky place, from the dark oak rack with its heavy old steins to the strangely befitting nature of the music, wailed forth by the balcony-raised orchestra, bespeaks freedom, frankness and kinship. I suppose it is only the taint from conventional other places that lingers and gives one an occasional twinge for looking his fill; but on this night of which I speak, Ben and I yielded to the temptation to let ourselves live our way into the lives of our companions quite as though we were not so conspicuously located at one of the center row tables.

We drank one, "just to show there's no antip'," to each other; and then the second, over which we proposed to linger, to the wondrous "confection" over at my right—the woman of the pale blue plumes, the brown panne suit, the wedding ring and the youth whom she should have sent home to his mother before she ever came here. "Say,"

said Ben, who's prone to the sentimental—sign of senile deterioration, I tell him—"let's cancel that toast, wash it off the rim by another to the kiddie at home"; and he inclined his head sidewise toward the charmer whose pompadour looked like the halo of a saint, and whose baby cheeks and eyes and mouth seemed framed for no other purpose than to be kissed—just a love-hungry bunch of blonde ways. With Ben's new thought in mind I studied her and the preposterous duckling with her, till a lump came into my throat; then I looked Ben in the eyes and drank it over again—"to the kid," and "to the kid." "'Spouse she hasn't any?" I was beginning with a sort of slippery laugh, when Ben interrupted. "What do you think of George and Susie and the Vil on your left?"

And it didn't take long to read that story. The Vil—that's short for "villain"—wore diamonds, a big black mustache, eyes that laughed all the time under bushy brows, a very red complexion and an unctuous manner that was like French dressing to the surprised young country tomato Susie evidently was. George, I've no doubt, was the sufficiently informed principal of Podunkville's Business College; and his pale, china blue eyes and ugly self-satisfied jaw were mighty good things for anyone, especially Susie, to look away from. She was only a faintly pretty, poor little tittering Tilly of a woman, to be sure; but George, the hubby, owed that prettiness and softness of hers something more than the supercilious nothingness of expression with which he favored her remarks to himself.

It was a wonder, the fascinated way she watched the bubbles in her glass; and she took her first sip as though she were about to mount a frisky automobile and expected the police ambulance presently to arrive and cart away the scattered fragments of herself. But after that first sip she gradually relaxed into smiles of timid exhilaration. By and by her cheeks were ripe peaches, and she forgot to consult hubby every time she ventured to say something. After we'd kept up a guarded looking for a few moments and noted that all the little attentions Susie—because she *was* a Susie—needed were coming from the Vil, with George sitting by in pale and distant superiority, we touched glasses, and as one voice chanted: "Susie—and the Vil!" "Only," Ben added, as you might know he would, "poor Susie gets the worst of it, either way; but Vil is the better chance, if she *must* throw."

Just about then a big, lusty, fine-groomed chap came in with a half-frightened, fresh-faced young woman—she had an ink stain on her middle finger, I noticed later—and they took two chairs, which had been carefully reserved for them by being tilted against the table in a remote and well screened corner. Something about the girl made you feel your own sister had just passed.

After that Ben was too thoughtful even to drink his Scotch for a while.

At several tables easily within the radius of our scrutiny were couples, some married and some not, who, except for their clothes, sparklers and general extravagance of finish, were too commonplace for special notice. One could simply size it up to a T, that if anyone should muster the courage ever to offer any of them a sympathetic thought, he'd be told to go back in his basket and turn over. That sort'll never know they're missing anything; and "where ignorance—" you know—what's the use?

"Say, Ned"—Ben leaned over to me—"I just got a line on the big young chap and the little girl over yonder, and he's buying her champagne. You

could tell by her face, too, she feels so complimented her young fool heart's going a regular canter; but she'd be scared to death if he hadn't told her champagne was really the most innocent of all beverages. I almost caught the words on his lips. The story's plain.. Great stunt you and I have, two old rascals like us coming here to have our bran' new smiles frapped into old age throat lumps. Guess you haven't learned yet, though, well as I have, that there's nothing in smoking but—smoke; and the tinkle of the ice 'gainst the glass is all that's left you when the game is done." He lifted his glass and contemplated it with a speculative eye.

That was going a little too strong for me, so I lighted a cigar, leaned back, and, while I let myself go on the waves of ineffables, the orchestra was careening over, experienced a guilty tickle of appreciation at the sight of the Vil reaching toward Susie's hand under the corner of the tablecloth. I had not yet outgrown, I confess it, a certain feel in the blood that the game really had some compensations. It felt good, too—as part of the picture—that the merriment in every part of the room was becoming freer; that the smoke of fragrant Havanas was soothing pessimistic reflections; that rosy visions of a new tomorrow were mounting in vague shimmering form from the depths of my glass of Scotch; and that loosened hopeful emotion should flow out to find echo in a low melting strain from the 'cello, and then, in its turn, should be caught up as echo to the long, sensuous, imaginative flight of the first violin. For two hours of the dizzy, if illusory, satisfaction of all his creature comforts, a man's sometimes willing, you know, to cash in for a whole bunch of dark brown regrets—tomorrow.

But while I was riding out on those soft strains, far away from the world as it is into the world as it never can be, the door opened, and down through the room, past the gay abstracted set who were making so merry over their suppers and their glasses, came—somebody. Here words don't come easily.

If I say he was pathetic, you'll think he was an object for some sort of charity—which would be like mistaking a twinkling star for an unsnuffed candle; and if I do not say he was pathetic, you'll guess nothing of how the sight of him could wring your heart. He came half fearfully, like a man feeling for obstacles in the dark. A bent, old, lovable granddaddy; the kind that ought to sit everlastingly with his good Joan in the chimney corner and spin from his young-old fancy tender and valiant fairies to dance on the hearth before the wide eyes of children; the kind to give us needed visions of a day when romance was more than a word; the kind you and I idolized, as boys, and dreamed we'd some day be—if only we hadn't— Well, never mind that. There he came; and I tell you he felt just like the letter you once got from home when you were a wild young colt, begging you not to forget how they looked at things at home—how your mother looked at things. Worn, neatly patched clothing; thin, soft, white hair swept back clean and straight from a high, serene forehead; trembling, delicate, old hands; gentle eyes that traveled wistfully and invitingly from face to face as he passed; feet that halted as though half hoping to be stayed by some possible friend. He was a stray breath from another and remote world, wandering patiently and unrecognized through an unfamiliar sphere; or, indeed, a wavering silhouette of the fine old Bohemia that was against the gross and bumptious Bohemia that is.

Few people paid him any noticeable attention as he went feebly on toward a small vacant table close beneath the orchestra balcony. For myself, I was fascinated, and Ben—he had completely forgotten me and everything else in his absorption. The old gentleman dropped gratefully into a chair, ordered a Scotch—I could see it was—and evidently, when it came, was at some pains to find change enough to pay for it. Then apparently he settled himself to wait for something, his face as happy and content as though the

Sign of the Thistle were the anteroom to Heaven and the sleepy orchestra a full-fledged angel chorus of welcome.

Finally, like a flash, it came to me: Signor Fenulli, once far famed as a lyric tenor in the days when he accompanied a triumphant Patti on her tours, was advertised to sing here tonight. Perhaps our old gentleman had heard the Signor and admired him in his days of glory. And surely that was the artist type of head; an artist's, the intense and credulous eye, an artist's, the sensitive, beautiful old hand. And thus had he figured it would pay him to come—here.

Suddenly, over the heads of the revelers, in strains for which violins and 'cellos have ever an eager love, floated the ravishing though familiar overture of "Il Trovatore," the old gentleman below exalted and pale with expectation. On and on they played, through heights and depths of sensuous longing, until, with a sudden surge of *crescendo* and *decrescendo*, they swung dizzily into the prelude to the passionate tenor flight of, "*Ah, che la morte ognora*." Then a stout and pathetic figure of faded importance rose to his feet before that music-hall orchestra and strained to the exactions of that great song. And yet, though he was fairly purple from his efforts, and sang in tones from which most of the purity and beauty had long since flown, no one could deny that he sang it effectively. There was style and something like real dramatic intensity of feeling there still; there was something awe-inspiring in his artistic faith in himself; and so lifted out of themselves were the people by the unusualness of the performance, that they gave him a rousing encore. Two or three foreign-sounding voices added their *bravos*.

Fenulli rose to bow and the orchestra evidenced the soft flurry preliminary to a repetition. They were indeed about to begin, when down below from the humble position of the floor rose an excited, high-pitched old voice. "Caspar—wait!" it commanded; and while all eyes started upon him, and no one had power or desire

to stay him—not even the ever watchful waiters—a bent but transfigured old gentleman rose abruptly from his seat and made his eager way into the balcony. There, oblivious to all the world, the two old men, Caspar Fenulli and the one of whom I tell you, grasped each other's hands, gazed joyously into each other's eyes and exchanged endearing epithets—orchestra and audience hushed and waiting.

"I will play for you this time, Caspar, just as in Milan—you remember Milan!" The words were boyishly enthusiastic and clear. And before that hypnotized band of musicians, he took unto himself the violin of the leader, motioned that astounded gentleman aside, gently and sensitively sounded the strings for their tuning, assumed the place of the deposed first violin and raised his bow for the beginning.

Thoroughly under his spell, the orchestra responded enthusiastically and as one person; they were surprised into responding as they had not known they could. And out of the first violin came a new voice, a master voice, the voice of inspiration, which is both sense and soul. The delicate fingers played over the strings with a touch that loved them and had full sense of their every possibility; the bow drew from them tones which sank into the heart and comforted it like perfect beauty for the first time realized. It was the very voice with which you prayed God to make you good—years ago. You knew it, and almost fell on your knees again, right there. And Fenulli—he was completely new created; and when he began, the people lost themselves in a rendition so fine, so noble, so young and pure in quality of tone, that veils over blind eyes were riven and sight was shamed. You never heard such a song or such an accompaniment, and to see those two old men come back for the time fully into their own was as good a sight as you'd get if—you hitched your kite to the moon and swung way out on its tail. All the world of high lights and high endeavors for the moment lay in the hollow

of your hand; you felt it and were equal to it. You wanted somehow to climb up where visions of beauty like that were possible again, and to cut out drivel and dust and carry a pure song in your inside pocket for a while, instead of a scented bit of indecent lace. You were suddenly curiously ashamed of yourself.

And I wasn't the only one—Lord, no! Everybody was dead silent while that violin voice and that human voice played peek-a-boo with the angels and the stars, and most everybody was pale; as the last notes of that song, full of heartbreak, came sobbing out over our heads, some people caught their breaths out loud; but again, when those supreme artists had quite finished, for a moment there was the heaviest silence you ever heard—this was the kind you *could* hear—and then everybody went wild. The women leaned back in their chairs, laughing and crying and limply clapping, while every man in the place was either stamping or on his feet shouting "Encore" and "Bravo," and nobody in the crowd knew just what he was doing.

They bowed and bowed, those two old magicians, and only when the unknown one, whose spirit had wrought the alchemy, finally displayed over the rail his trembling and spent old hands, did the crowd desist in their applause.

The earlier miracle began to be felt again. The hush crept back upon the crowd for a spell; and when talk finally began it had a clean, fresh washed sound that boded ill for the Sign of the Thistle. I stole a look about me. Susie had gotten up softly and moved her chair around by hubby; Blue Plumes was sitting back, sort of teary-smily and distant in her chair and reaching absently for her gloves; the youth acted as though there were breakables somewhere under his feet; and even those with eyes that see not looked sort of constrained and as if they'd got a bobtail hint of something they'd never dreamed of before.

Then down out of the balcony came a beatified old man, and everyone turned to his coming with a sigh of



relief. On his face lay the light of a hundred triumphant yesterdays—and a peace marvelous to behold. He waved a friendly and jovial hand to Caspar above. "See you tomorrow, Caspar," he called happily. His hand shook perceptibly as he reached for his coat. A nearby waiter sprang to assist him, and the old gentleman tipped him his last dime with a manner which would have done credit to the Czar. Then he looked about him at the crowd, and a sort of take-you-all-into-my-confidence smile shone out over us. "Haven't had a Scotch highball in so long it went to my head—and then to my fingers, I guess. Much obliged, though, for your generous applause. I'd have another with you all, friends"—the thin old voice almost broke at this point—"only—you see—Mary is waiting at home—and I've never let conviviality keep me from Mary. I—"

Here a big sob broke from some feminine throat. Someone began to cry softly but hysterically—with a masculine voice trying both to hush and to cover, and then the "pretty sister" girl rushed wildly out of her screened corner and threw herself on the floor at the feet of a suddenly stricken old man. "Grandfather," she sobbed, "take me home—take me home!"

An ashen dignity fell upon the grand old face, and he lifted the girl to his arm. "Come," he said.

Guess it wasn't very good business for the house, either. The George-Susie-Vil combination broke up and left; likewise Blue Plumes; likewise others. And Ben, the blooming old Quixote, went outside, swearing and choking alternately at every step. And it's true—what I've been telling you!



## ASPIRATION

By MARGARET CAROLYN

**H**ELP me to live  
 With eyes that see the good in everything;  
 With lips whose need is but to smile and sing;  
 With hands whose dearest task is helpfulness;  
 With heart afire to comfort all distress.

Help me to love  
 With all the joy of springtime just begun;  
 With all the warmth of shadeless summer sun;  
 With all the glory of the autumn's glow;  
 With all the purity of winter's snow.



# ON LONE TREE HILL

By JEAN WEBSTER

AS she came to the cluster of bamboo huts that formed the village bazaar, Lady Mellish slowed her horse to a walk, while the native groom, who had been panting along behind, came to her stirrup and looked up appealingly. He was excessively breathless, considering that they had only come a mile, but he knew Lady Mellish, and it was policy to be breathless at this point. She was too tender-hearted to enjoy the Singhalese custom of having her groom follow on foot. She nodded and laughed; and Ramasmy, with as near a grin as a Tamil reaches, dropped aside to wait until she should have completed her daily circuit around Ruanweli Pass, when he would fall into step at the horse's heels and so return to the tea estate in proper order, no one the wiser that he had not earned his half rupee.

Lady Mellish jogged along with a listless eye on the view which, after five weeks, was becoming monotonous. She had visited tea estates, where there was society as well as scenery, and where it would have been pleasant to linger; but the Dinwiddie estate was not of these. Its virtue was that it lay on the edge of virgin jungle, with elephants, leopards, wild boar and elk to reward the gun of the sportsman. Lady Mellish was discovering that an English wife stops where her husband chooses.

After an interminable stretch of open road, where the heat was reflected back from the white dust with the killing force of a blast furnace, she drew rein in the shade of a mango tree that marked the turning where a bridle path branched off from the highway.

It looked invitingly cool with its over-arching palms. She had started earlier than usual; there was plenty of time—suppose she should try it? She knew perfectly how the road ran, having studied its direction on the district map in the tea factory.

"Where does that go?" she had inquired of Mr. Cunningham, the superintendent.

"That? Oh, it leads around Lone Tree Hill and strikes the Kandy road at a native village. Not much to see, and pretty steep going."

She had asked one more question, her finger on a black dot halfway around.

"Then that spot must mark the Lone Tree estate?"

He had nodded, and she had stored the information for future use. She had always wished to get around Lone Tree Hill and see the view from the other side, and she had particularly wished to ride past the Lone Tree estate. It had piqued her curiosity ever since she had been in the neighborhood. She hesitated for a moment, then with a little laugh pulled her horse into the path.

The grade was steep, but she held to a pretty stiff pace, mindful of the fact that night in the tropics falls early and swift. She had accomplished some three miles, and had just entered a thickly shaded stretch, where the moisture of a mountain stream made doubly luxuriant the tangle of ferns and creepers. A couple of monkeys were quarreling in the branches overhead, and she was riding with her eyes on them rather than on the road, when suddenly, without the slightest warning,

the horse swerved sharply to the left, and a moment later she found herself on the ground. Whether she had been thrown or had jumped she did not know, but she did know that a cobra with hood erect was occupying the center of the path. The two regarded each other for a breathless second, then the snake glided into the undergrowth.

Her horse had come to a standstill some yards ahead and was waiting with a half-apologetic air. Lady Mellish recovered him, only to find to her dismay that the girth had broken and the stirrup was dragging on the ground. She realized now what a foolhardy thing she had done in letting Ramasmy stay behind. It was a question of walking the five miles back to the bazaar or finding help ahead. The Lone Tree estate could not be more than half a mile farther, and the planter was a white man—he was more than that: a fellow countryman. He could scarcely refuse help in such an emergency.

She slipped the bridle over her arm and pressed forward, keeping an alert eye on the undergrowth at either side. The next turning, to her relief, brought open road again, and just ahead, embowered in palm and bamboo and creeper, she spied the low, sprawling roof of a bungalow. That must be it! Yes, farther to the left she made out the corrugated iron roofs of the tea factory. Lady Mellish paused a moment to straighten her hat, and having wiped the dust from her face and pushed into place a stray hairpin, she advanced with a more jaunty air.

Turning into the compound, she came to a stand before a deep veranda strewn with comfortable chairs and shaded with vines and rattan screens. The hermit was at least no ascetic. A couple of hounds sleeping on the stone flagging awoke and raised an uproar. Half a dozen natives sprang to life, staring and jabbering, while the visitor pointed to her saddle and explained in English. After five minutes of Babel an idea occurred to someone, and a little brown boy was dispatched toward the long sheds of the tea factory. He presently came bounding

back between the bushes, a tall white figure behind him.

Lady Mellish watched the approach with vivid curiosity. For five weeks she had been wondering what manner of man this could be who showed such slight inclination for society in a land where the mere fact of having the same color of skin constitutes friendship. There was no real reason why he should have paid his respects to the distinguished visitors, the Lone Tree estate being independent and not under the control of the Company, but still, his offhand ignoring of their presence in the district showed a morosely unsocial disposition—a disposition, nevertheless, which interested Lady Mellish far more than an eager desire to please could have done.

She was surprised to see how young he looked and how well set up. There was not a spot on his white clothes from the crown of his head to the soles of his pipe-clayed shoes. A planter, living alone with natives, is so likely to grow careless in matters of dress. He advanced with no show of emotion. For all his manner conveyed, it was a daily affair for pretty young women in correct English riding clothes to go wandering about alone in the heart of Ceylon. He took in the situation at a glance and bowed gravely, his eyes on the horse rather than on her.

"You've had an accident, I see." He was examining the strap. "Rotten leather," he observed. "Are you alone? Where is your *sais*?"

She explained her charitable disposal of Ramasmy.

"You are Lady Mellish?" He asked the question without a flicker of curiosity.

"Yes," she responded somewhat drily, "I am Lady Mellish."

He was taken up with the saddle and did not offer to introduce himself. She watched him, half amused, half piqued; then, since he made no move to carry on the conversation, she did it herself.

"And you, I suppose, are the American planter who runs the Lone Tree estate?"

He nodded without looking up, and she added with a touch of audacity:

"A pretty decent sort, I hear, though you do keep deucedly to yourself."

He stared for a startled moment, then laughed. "I have Cunningham to thank for that description; his language is picturesque rather than accurate."

"Why haven't you called?" she demanded.

"I had not supposed that Lady Mellish could have any interest in me, a mere American."

"You know very well that I am American myself!"

"I thought when you married Lord Mellish you became English."

She shrugged one shoulder slightly and sauntered off to study the view. The man raised his head and looked after her, an alert expression springing to his face. He had talked to coolies for so long that he had almost forgotten the polite circumlocutions in which one converses with white women. She finished her inspection of the view and sauntered back.

"Can you fix the saddle?"

"No," he said bluntly, "I can't. You will have to wait while I send a coolie down to the village. Will that make you too late? I can send a runner to Dinwiddie with a note for Lord Mellish."

"Thank you, it's not necessary; he's off in camp after elk. No one will worry but Ramasmy."

"It will do him good. The lazy dog ought to be thrashed!"

"How you have picked up English ways!" she murmured.

He stared again, then whirled upon the group of natives with a few curt sentences in Singhalese that dispersed them as quickly as they had come. The saddle went in one direction, the horse in another, while the rest merely evaporated.

"Won't you sit down?" he asked, with a motion toward the veranda. "We'll have some tea in a few moments if those idiots can get it ready; they're not used to serving ladies."

Presently a servant lifted the rattan

screen that hung over the door and Lady Mellish caught a glimpse of a wide, dim interior.

"Oh, what a charming room!" she cried. "May I go in?"

He bowed permission, neither encouragingly nor discouragingly, and held back the screen. The room extended to another vine-draped veranda in the rear. Carved teakwood cases filled with books ran around the walls, with, on top of the cases, bits of stone bas-reliefs—relics of the buried cities—and gold carved Buddhas and Hindoo gods. The floor was bare marble and the chairs were simple rattan.

"What a deliciously cool room!" she cried again. "I don't wonder you prefer staying at home to making calls."

She began a round of the cases, nodding her head approvingly as she met her own favorites, glancing indifferently at a section devoted to law, skipping German with equal disdain, then pausing before a shelf of Italian classics.

"And do you read Italian?" she demanded. "Who ever would have thought to find Dante in the original in the District of Ruanweli?"

"I haven't opened an Italian book for years," he confessed. "My knowledge is too rusty to take me far."

She glanced about and sighed. "The Dinwiddie library consists of forty-seven volumes, mostly on tea and sport, though they do have Marie Corelli complete."

He laughed, and with a gesture made her free of the shelves. "I will send a coolie tomorrow with whatever you wish."

They returned to the veranda for tea, and Lady Mellish poured.

"This is such a lark!" she declared. "To be lost in the jungle, attacked by a cobra, rescued by an American and entertained with tea and guava jelly—I sha'n't sleep tonight after such a dizzying whirl of adventures."

Her companion listened to her chatter at first with quiet amusement, but little by little he was drawn irresistibly

into the talk. Their topics were the topics of the country—sport and the beasts of the jungle, Hindooism, Buddhism and what the English have done for the East; then in the end they turned to America. He asked question on question with a queer, intense eagerness; queries about politics and party campaigns that she could not answer, gossip about men who had passed out of public life ten years before and absurd questions as to the changed topography of New York. Was the Subway a success? Was it true that they were going to tunnel the Hudson River? And what in thunder, he wanted to know, did that building they called the "Flatiron" look like?

She broke off, laughing, in the midst of an impassioned flight of rhetoric.

"Isn't this a beautiful exhibition of patriotism on the part of two exiles? If you are so interested in America, why don't you go back? You haven't married an Englishman."

He waved his hand over the hillsides covered with billowing green.

"Who would take care of my tea?"

"Fetch up a half-caste from Colombo." She leaned forward and looked at him with sudden daring. "I know I'm not polite, but I'm simply eaten up with curiosity! Please tell me why you bury yourself in Ceylon. I didn't break the girth on purpose," she added with a laugh. "Don't suspect me of that."

He disposed of her question with a shrug. "Growing tea happens to be my business in life, and one can't do that on Long Island."

"What's tea?" Her tone implied contempt.

"A very useful commodity, its cultivation a highly honorable profession. We can't all marry lords who own whole companies. Some of us must do the actual work."

She cast him a sharp side glance. His eyes were on the tops of the palms.

"Tea, tea, tea!" she exclaimed. "It's all that Ceylon talks about. I am tired of the very word. I shall begin taking cocoa for *chota hazri*."

"A man must do something; why not raise tea as well as cocoa?"

"Why either?"

"A man must live."

"Live! Do you call this living? You—an educated, cultured, intelligent American! Have we so many that we can afford to throw them away? There are plenty of people whom society can very well spare to raise tea. It is a shame for a man like you to spend his life buried in the jungle. It isn't life; it's a living death."

A quick expression of pain shot over his face. "You don't need to tell me that."

"Oh, I'm sorry!" she exclaimed.

"I am always saying things I ought not. My husband says I chatter too much."

"No—please." He made a gesture of dissent. "I like to hear you. It's a pleasure the gods don't often vouchsafe; only, you were probing me in a tender spot. I dare say, in whatever occupation a man finds himself, he sometimes has moments of thinking he doesn't amount to much. As for an exile, marooned on a far-off island, with all the time in the world to think—you rub it in, you know." He pulled himself to his feet and added in a matter-of-fact tone that banished personalities: "Wouldn't you like to look over the plantation? Mine deserves inspection no less than the others."

She followed him, politely acquiescent. As they strolled through the factory, she paused to watch the stream of leaves that a coolie was feeding into the rolling machine, obligingly peered into the desiccator when another coolie opened the door, and commented pleasantly upon the cleanliness of the sheds. Her companion regarded her with an amused smile.

"That was admirably done for a lady who has seen the same thing twenty times before, and who acknowledges that she is bored by the very name of tea. I will spare you the withering loft. Suppose we go outside? The view from the top of Lone Tree, at least, you have never seen before."

The path wound up the hill between files of tea, with pluckers at work on every hand, their draperies of madder red and saffron yellow setting off the polish of bare brown flesh and looking like great flaming poppies in the field of green. They left the tea fields behind, and came out at last on the summit of the hill where a century old tamarind tree dominated the landscape. The climb had been steep, and Lady Mellish dropped, a bit breathless, onto the stone seat in the shade.

"It is beautiful!" she said.

Open slopes of tea, interspersed with bamboo and palm, fell away eight hundred feet to the steaming lowlands, terraced with paddy and covered toward the horizon with unbroken jungle.

The man appeared to take a certain satisfaction in her approval of his view—almost as though he had made it himself. He pointed out the distant gleam of water that marked a half-ruined tank where wild elephants came at night to drink, and the narrow trail of the old Kandy road, along which the bullock carts used to crawl with the chests of tea before the railway was built.

"How long have you been here?" she asked, raising her eyes from the valley to the bronzed face of the man beside her.

"Thirteen years."

"It is beautiful, magnificent," she repeated, "but—thirteen years! Is a view enough to keep one contented all that time?"

"If it is all one has, it has to be enough."

"Fatalism—the curse of the East! If you want more, why don't you go and take it?"

"I have learned wisdom with years."

"Wisdom? The ease of inertia is what one learns with years. You ought to fight it off. You're too young a man to sit down under a palm tree, native fashion, and say, 'What will be, will be.'"

Her companion laughed.

"It is easy to see, Lady Mellish, that you have not been long from America; but I really don't think you need

preach your gospel of energy to me. When I came, Lone Tree Hill was covered with jungle and infested with every beast of prey from leopards to leeches. Had I spent my thirteen years sitting under a palm tree saying, 'What will be, will be,' you wouldn't be finding so much tea today. There's the muster call!" he added, as the insistent throb of a tom-tom echoed over the hill. "It's later than I thought; I'm afraid you must be starting. My boy will go with you until you pick up your own *sais*. And don't be afraid to make him run; he's used to a master who doesn't spare his eggs."

They turned back down the path between the bushes. The pluckers had deserted the field; the sound of their chatter rose shrilly from the muster ground where they were sorting the leaves.

"This has been a rare pleasure, Lady Mellish," the man said, as they regained the compound. "I hear so little news of the outside world; I see so few women, particularly of my own country. You can't know—" He stopped, then added simply: "It will be something pleasant to think about."

She was touched by his evident loneliness.

"It has been a pleasure for me also to meet a fellow countryman. The Dinwiddie estate, as you know, has little to offer in the way of spiritual entertainment. Perhaps some other day you will give me tea if my saddle girth should happen to break?"

A cloud passed over his face, and when he spoke he stammered slightly; for the first time his easy assurance seemed to vanish.

"It's a great temptation—but—but, I can't let you. I—I'm afraid that Lord Mellish—"

She stiffened quickly, an angry flush sweeping over her face.

"I didn't mean," he said with an answering flush, "what you think. I meant—it's hard to explain—" He halted and drew a deep breath. "Lady Mellish, I must remind you that the mere fact of our coming from the same

country would not be considered an introduction. You don't even know my name."

"Oh, yes, I know your name." She made an impatient, half-disdainful gesture with her crop. "It's Howard Breslaw."

He laughed shortly. "Mr. Cunningham, I fear, has left nothing unsaid."

"There was very little for him to say," she retorted. "As I told you before, you have a reputation for exclusiveness which seems to be merited."

She kept on toward the bungalow and he followed in silence. As they reached the veranda steps he ventured:

"At least, Lady Mellish, you will let me send the books?"

She hung fire a visible second, then determined to be gracious. They entered the room together and she strolled from case to case.

"How can I ever make up my mind?" Her eye lighted upon the Italian books. "I shall never have so much leisure again; this is the time for me to brush up my Italian." She glanced along the row from volume to volume. "Boccaccio, Manzoni, Pellico, Leopardi—he's so hopelessly tragic! That," she added, tapping a book with her crop, "is the saddest thing I ever read. Do you remember the epitaph on the hero's grave? It sums up the whole thing in a sentence."

He shook his head, smiling slightly at her choice. "I haven't opened the book since I left college."

She pulled it out and blew the dust from the top. It fell open at the fly-leaf, where a name was scrawled across the page. The man made a quick movement, as if to intercept her, and then, seeing that it was too late, he folded his arms and watched.

"Philip Breslin!" she exclaimed. He could see her struggling to remember. She looked up, arrested by his expression. "It's your name! Why didn't you tell me? You're a writer, aren't you? I've such a wretched memory. I can't remember what you've done, but the name is very familiar. Tell me—I know you're fa-

mous." She faced him with eager, questioning eyes.

"Not famous," he said softly. "Infamous."

A gleam of illumination flashed across her face. She dropped the book on the table and fell back a step.

"That man—you?"

He bowed his head without speaking.

"Oh!" she cried in a tone that was almost a sob. "I was in boarding school when it happened, and Mrs. Chanler's younger sister was my roommate. They tried to keep us from knowing; we weren't allowed to read the papers, but the day pupils talked. All through the trial Cathy used to lie awake in the night and cry."

They faced each other a moment in a constrained silence; then the man said quietly:

"I think your horse must be ready, Lady Mellish."

He held back the screen and she passed outside. She stood still on the veranda and glanced about curiously, as though she were studying his surroundings in a new light. Her eyes rested finally on the broad valley below, where the night mist was creeping over the rice fields. When she spoke there was a remoteness in her voice that made it seem to come from the other side of a barrier.

"And you've been here—hiding—all these years?"

He answered in a tone as impersonal as if he were explaining the method of tea culture.

"Hiding—yes, in a sense. For obvious reasons I don't hang about the hotels in Colombo where the Americans stop. I swallowed all the slights I intend to swallow before I left home. But I'm not a fugitive from justice, if that's what you mean. The jury acquitted me. I struck him in self-defense."

She watched his face in a sort of fascinated horror; and then, as she caught a glimpse of the weariness and desperation that lay under the mask of his everyday manner, her own expression softened.

"I understand," she said gently.



"The law exonerated you, but you condemned yourself. You are working out a penance alone, in exile."

He smiled slightly.

"That sounds well," he agreed, "but I'm afraid it isn't strictly true. The law would let me live in America, but society would not. The houses of those who had been my friends were closed to me; my clubs asked for my resignation. I should have been far lonelier in New York than here on Lone Tree Hill."

His eyes rested darkly on the valley; then he roused himself to add: "You see now why I couldn't let you come back. I ought not to have let you stay. I could have found a strap. Sending the saddle to the village was merely a ruse to keep you—it had been so long since I had talked to a woman."

"How unspeakably lonely your life must be!"

"Lonely! There have been times when I have been ready to shoot myself. If I had any happy memories, that would be some consolation, but there's nothing in the past that I want to remember. Every man deserves to have a woman love him once in his life, but I have never had it. She didn't care for me. She was only amusing herself. She wanted to see how far I would go. She found out! And so, because when I was young and foolish and impulsive I chose to love the wrong sort of woman, the right sort is shut out of my life forever."

"But you were a mere boy!" she cried. "It isn't fair that you should suffer for what he did. Fourteen years ago you were a different person."

"I tell myself so," he said wearily, "but who knows? You can never be sure what you will do till the emergency comes. Did you ever read 'Lord Jim'? No? It's the story of a ship's officer—a white man—who prided himself on being brave, and when the chance came to prove it, he deserted a sinking ship with eight hundred natives aboard, and spent the rest of his life dodging the people who knew him. It takes me to sympathize with the poor devil." He pulled

himself together with an evident effort. "But there's no use talking about it. The thing's done, and there's the end. I mustn't detain you any longer; it is growing dark."

They walked on down to where the horse was standing. He helped her to mount and stood beside her, bare-headed, his eyes fixed somberly on her face.

"Good-bye," she said, stretching down her hand.

He grasped it quickly and for an instant held it against his cheek.

"I wish—" he said impotently, and then he stopped.

She caught her breath in a half sob.

"Good-bye," he whispered, and released her.

She rode away down the hill, slowly, without looking back, the bare-footed *sais* pattering in the dust at the horse's heels. Breslin watched her out of sight, then sauntered aimlessly toward the bungalow. Overhead the night breeze was rustling among the fronds of the palm trees, bringing with it the scent of jessamine and gardenia. Fireflies were glowing in the shrubbery, and from far off came the plaintive cry of a night bird. Every sense spoke to him of the haunting beauty and the no less haunting loneliness that the tropics hold for the white man.

He turned back indoors and dropped into a chair, where he sat idly waiting while his bearer brought the lamp. Its light fell upon the Italian book lying on the table. He picked it up and studied the sprawling signature, thinking wistfully of the boy who wrote it—a boy eager to escape from the little life of college into the big life of the world. While his thoughts were still groping in the past, his hands mechanically turned the leaves, until at the end a passage standing by itself caught his attention. He set himself to puzzling it out, word by word, murmuring the translation aloud:

"Here lies Filippo Ottonieri, born for renown and virtuous deeds, who lived without profit and died without fame, ignorant neither of his possibilities nor of his achievement."

# THE SAME OLD THING\*

By ROI COOPER MEGRUE

## CHARACTERS

HE

SHE

THE OTHER MAN

**S**CENE—Any room, about eleven o'clock in the evening. There is an alcove at the left with a French window, and doors at right and center. A desk at the right, with a telephone. The furnishings and atmosphere of the room are those of good taste and charm.

When the curtain rises SHE is sitting in front of the desk. She tears up an opened letter, picks up another, reads it and tears it up. She picks up a third letter.

SHE (reading aloud)

"I saw your play Saturday afternoon. You were perfect and my ideal of all that a woman should be. I adore you and, oh, won't you send me an auto-graphed photograph? I am going to see the play again next week, and if I sit in a box will you smile at me?"

(She gives a half-pathetic little laugh and puts the letter down. She picks up another and reads a fragment.)

"It must be fascinating to be an actress. I have always made a real hit in our comedy club, and everybody says I ought to go on the stage. Won't you help me to be an actress just like you?" Poor, silly, sweet, foolish little girls!

(She glances at the three remaining letters, puts one aside and then tears them all up. She crosses to a mirror at the right and from her vanity bag touches up the rouge on her cheeks, gives a pat to the puffs in her hair and comes back to the telephone, on the desk. She speaks into the receiver.)

When Mr.— When a gentleman from the Recorder calls, show him up. Give me— Just a moment!

(She picks up the one letter she has not destroyed and glances at it.)

Give me 1732 Central. (Pause.) Hello! Is Mr. Hale at home? Please say that Miss Collamore regrets very much that she cannot see Mr. Hale tonight, but she hopes to be able to see him next week.

(She hangs up the receiver.)

And yet he's rather a nice boy.

(She lights a cigarette, takes a puff or two and then goes out at the right. As she does so THE OTHER MAN enters quietly through the French window in the alcove, with the air of one who is quite at home. He takes off his coat and hat, comes into the room, looks about, takes out his cigarette case, hears a knock at the door, and, self-possessed, quickly goes back into the alcove whence he came. He is out of sight.)

(SHE enters from the right, hurriedly.)

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SHE

Yes?

HE (*outside*)

May I come in?

SHE

Yes, do.

(*HE enters and crosses quickly to her.*)The gentleman from the *Recorder* is welcome.

HE

I ought to interview you as to your opinion of drama and audiences and art, but, not being a reporter, I sha'n't. (*He kisses her hand.*)

SHE

And if you really were a newspaper man, I'm in the mood to tell for the first time what I honestly think of the conceited author who struts through the world with his play, as if—as if he *had* done something; of the audiences who, with occasional exceptions, resent anything in which love is lacking, in which there isn't an embrace at the end of the play. Yet usually they won't even wait for that embrace—they're too busy sticking in hat pins. I'm tired of them tonight, Billy, tired.

HE

But love is a big motive; every man is doing his work for some woman.

SHE

Is he? I wonder. I wonder if he isn't often playing the game for the sake of the game itself?

(*He starts to interrupt. She goes on.*)

And even if he isn't, he isn't always thinking of the woman or making mushy love to her; and he isn't with her all the time—not by a long shot. He's doing real things; he's in the big romance of business, the big clash of the survival of the brainiest, for it is brains that make the world go round; love makes it slide. I'm sick of the word "love." There, how would that be for an interview?

HE (*sitting next to her*)

I dare say it would be thought a pose. I should think it so.

SHE

Yes; you and they would rather hear the same old bromides—of art— Ugh, I'm sick of it!

(*She leans forward and takes his hand.*)

Talk to me. The world seems drab tonight. I want to be amused, Mr. Reporter Man.

HE

It wasn't I who suggested that I assume the title of reporter—

SHE (*interrupting*)

I know; it was my idea to give you that title as an explanation to Mr. Grundy behind the desk downstairs why you call so often—and stay so long.

HE

But what do you care for suave Mr. Grundy?

SHE

It isn't that. But I am an actress, or, at least, I'm on the stage and in the public eye. And the glass before that eye isn't smoked; it's a microscope that magnifies a handclasp into a *liaison*, turns pink into scarlet and makes white black. Miss Collamore must be—careful! Discretion covers a multitude of sins.

HE (*looking at her contemplatively*)

It's a pity you are so beautiful.

SHE

Flatterer!

HE

No, that isn't flattery. It's truth. Beauty is only skin deep, and so, apparently, no one thinks to look beneath the surface. You've real brains, but no one but me would believe it.

SHE (*airily*)

There are others—(*A little wistfully*)—but not many.

(*There is a pause.*)

HE

Go on talking; you've been doing it rather well.

SHE

I wonder why we actresses, who, after all, are rather stupid, are expected to say as witty and as clever things off the stage as we do on, where it is someone else who has written the clever things for us?

HE

Yes? And—

SHE

No one in the audience thinks of the author. I remember once going to

see "Man and Superman," and coming out ahead of me two matinee girls—the kind that write for your picture—were discussing the star. "Isn't he a dear!" said one. "And so good-looking!" "Yes," said the other, "and he does say the wittiest things!" Poor Bernard Shaw!

HE (*smiling*)

And so the matinee girl still exists!

SHE

Exists! She's multiplying. I was tearing up letters from her when you came in—nice little letters, too, that are foolish, and yet—I should miss them. When they stop it will be the beginning of the end for me.

(*She looks at him and holds up the waste basket.*)

But they haven't even begun to stop yet. Listen to this.

(*She picks up the one letter that still remains on the desk.*)

It's from a boy, who's written me rather amusing letters now and then for a year or so. The other night I met him at dinner; he's a nice boy, too.

(*She reads.*)

"I adored your sanity and your wit and your charm and—you! When one puts a girl on a pedestal made up of all the virtues that make a girl the very real thing and keeps her there in perspective for a year, it is a miracle, when one meets her, to find her still there, with never a tremble or a tiny tumble. But like seeks like, and you are something of a miracle yourself. When can I see you again?"

HE

And your answer?

SHE

I had Hortense telephone him he might come to see me after the play tonight.

HE

While I'm here?

SHE

No, for I telephoned him a few minutes ago not to come.

HE (*puzzled*)

But why first have said—and then—

SHE

To soften the blow. I didn't want him to be flinging himself at my feet.

HE

Did you read his letter carefully?

SHE

Yes. Of course, he doesn't say anything vivid, but between the lines—

HE

Has it occurred to you that his letter is perhaps somewhat humorous; that he isn't at all in love with you, but in love with the idea of knowing you; that he expresses himself more exaggeratedly with you than he would to Miss Jones just from Vassar, because—and rightly—he thinks you are more used to admiration? You haven't realized that it isn't love, but vanity with him, and that it's your vanity that makes you misunderstand.

SHE

Nonsense! He's desperately in love with me.

HE

Nonsense it would be if he *were*, but he isn't—and you know it.

SHE (*smiling*)

Of course I know it, but I didn't think you would. I telephoned him because I'd rather talk to you.

HE

You flatter me.

SHE

No; it's because I know you rather better than the rest. You're not particularly handsome; you're not very clever, but you're quite willing to let me do most of the talking, and I can be honest with you about the theater, because you're not of it, nor tainted with its artificiality.

HE (*sarcastically*)

Surely you flatter me!

SHE (*reflectively*)

No; you're as conceited as the average man, but, compared with the average actor, you're as shy as the modest violet. And you don't talk shop, and yet you'll let me talk it.

(*She pauses.*)

HE (*very earnestly, leaning forward*)

You let me come tonight because you were—lonely.

SHE (*gaily*)

I find I ought to have added to my list of your virtues that of perception. Usually God gives that to my sex.

HE (*earnestly*)

You may chaff about it, but you *were* lonely. It's a tragic thing to be *really* lonely. I know.

SHE (*leaning forward*).

You know?

HE

I do. I've been so lonely— Good God! I've— (*He breaks off.*) Well, you understand. But since I've come to know you I've not been so alone.

SHE (*softly*)

That's good. I'm glad to know I've meant that to you, too, and I haven't been so lonely either—with you.

(*She looks at him.*)

HE (*going to her*)

Peggy.

(*He attempts to take her in his arms.*)

SHE

No, don't—that would spoil it. It isn't so much that I seriously mind a kiss. That doesn't represent very much to me any more. All it ought to stand for has gone—the bloom is off. (*Wistfully*) You see, I've been kissed so often for so many years by so many men—every night and twice on Wednesdays and Saturdays—that to me there isn't much more sentiment in it than in shaking hands.

HE

How illogical you are! If it has no importance, then what's the objection?

SHE (*a little sadly*)

I'm so afraid you'd lose your respect for me, and I should be very lonely without you to talk to. Remember, you're a man and I'm an actress. If I *were* only Miss Jones just from Vassar, it probably wouldn't matter; it would simply be a flirtation—possibly an engagement or a marriage.

HE (*turning up stage irritated*)

Nonsense!

SHE

So often, though we mean nothing by it, men misunderstand and take our little demonstrations and superficial impulses as indications of—a loving temperament. We actresses do become unconventional. You see, we live so much in our emotions, and familiarity with affection breeds contempt.

HE

But I wouldn't misunderstand.

SHE (*smiling*)

I sha'n't give you the chance to. (*Seriously*) I've had too much loneliness to risk our friendship.

HE

But you oughtn't to be lonely.

SHE (*quickly*)

Why not, if *you* are?

HE

Oh, it's different with me. I'm not on the stage, with its gaiety and admiration—

SHE

But all that doesn't prevent loneliness. Listen. Two months ago it was Christmas. I was on the road in a big city. There were only a handful of people at the matinee—those with homes stay there Christmas Day. And afterward I had dinner by myself in my room, just with my maid for company, and that night after the play I went back to the hotel and cried because I was so alone. And that happens often!

HE (*protesting*)

But surely you could have dined out with friends!

SHE

I could have dined out, but not with *friends*. Those who would have had me wanted me to show me off as they might exhibit a trained elephant. They wanted to be able to say, "Miss Collamore dined with us last night," to wonder if I did dye my hair, to argue as to whether I rouged or not and whether those pearls of mine were real, and if I *were* in love with the leading man—in short, to analyze, inspect and dissect someone who has been a success.

HE

Why?

SHE

Don't you know the moment you succeed you are criticized? The very people who help you *to* it are the very ones who, when you *do* succeed, turn and accuse you of all sorts of things.

HE

What, for instance?

SHE

Well, of—having an "angel," and we all know what that means. The quickest way for an actress to lose her reputation is to be a success.

HE

Then why don't you quit it all?

SHE

I don't know—and yet I do. I'm rich enough to stop working, and my brain tells me it's foolish to pass one's life traveling in impossible railroad trains at impossible hours, living in disgusting hotels, eating vile food, coming out of the glorious world of air and sunshine to paint your face and say over unreal noble heroine lines, when all the time I might be living comfortably in New York, dashing off into the country, seeing and enjoying my one or two really true friends.

HE (*softly*)

That's what your brain tells you?

SHE

Yes; and then in the summer, when I begin to hate the sight of a theater or the thought of a play, I run away to London or to Paris, or motor through Italy, or camp out in Maine, or go horseback riding out West. I love it all, and then of a sudden in a couple of months the taste of it grows stale and I want to get back to the theater. You can't work the best part of your life and then say: "Now I'll rest and just enjoy people and things and myself." We who work can't stop till we have to. I'll go on until our highly civilized but none the less Roman mob says "Thumbs down" and destroys me—by staying away from my plays.

HE

If that's what your heart says, your heart runs away with your head.

SHE

I suppose so, but when once the lure of the stage gets into your blood, deep down into your very bones, it's only one Mary Anderson in a hundred thousand actresses who quits—in time.

HE (*casually*)

It's quite tragic.

SHE

You say that as a commonplace polite answer, but it is tragic, and the real

tragedy of it is that the public thinks of us as moths around the candle, getting singed a little now and then, but ever in the light—gay little pleasure seeking, pleasure finding butterflies. But, really, we're very human, and we suffer—much.

HE (*softly*)

Poor little butterfly cursed with a brain!

SHE

And cursed with a heart.

HE

And with a husband.

SHE

Oh, I'm sorry you said that! Up to now I was thanking you all the time, inside, because you had left him out of our discussion. It was so nice of you not to refer to the wronged wife—so unmelodramatic.

HE

I'm sorry.

SHE

And think how disappointed my kind public would be if I *were* happy with my husband! No actress is supposed to be happily married.

HE (*cynically*)

Few are, I fancy.

SHE (*laughingly*)

You see, there sounds the voice of the public, and if Jim and I were a loving couple, you can't imagine how resentful the public is when facts contradict its theories. (*Rising.*) Heigh-ho! Why have you let me ramble on like this?

HE (*crossing to her*)

I must be a congenial soul.

SHE

Oh, you are.

(*There is a long pause.*)

HE (*suddenly*)

You're desperately lonely; so am I. Why don't we cut it all and go away together?

SHE (*moving away*)

You're very amusing.

HE (*unheeding*)

You've admitted in every word you've said that the public doesn't give you credit for what I know you are—a good woman.

SHE (*gently*)

Thank you for realizing I *am* that.

HE

You admit you haven't the conventional idea of things. Why not the game as well as the name? We've both a right to happiness. We—

SHE

The same old arguments about the same old thing. If there'd been a lover in Eden he would have said them to Eve.

HE (*coming close to her*)

You don't know what all you've said tonight has meant to me. It's made me realize for the first time that you are unhappy. I'm not to be put off by a playful allusion to the antiquity of my arguments. I *can* make you happy.

SHE (*looking up at him audaciously*)

Prove it to me.

(*He suddenly seizes her in his arms and kisses her passionately. She doesn't struggle. He releases her.*)

HE (*covering his eyes*)

I'm sorry. Forgive me.

SHE (*not indignant, but very cool and self-possessed*)

You needn't be sorry. It was, in its way and of its kind, a convincing proof, but we couldn't be kissing all the time. What about the lonely interludes?

HE

Words, words, words.

(*He kisses her again.*)

SHE (*quickly releasing herself*)

Evidently you think we could be kissing *most* of the time.

HE (*irritated*)

You seem to take it very humorously.

SHE

Kissing, as I said, doesn't mean very much to me, but, unfortunately, my broad views are not shared by my husband. Suppose he should suddenly appear?

HE

Oh, but he won't.

SHE

It would, of course, be in execrably bad taste, but in all the plays I've ever played in, when the situation is like

this the husband invariably comes in—or there'd be no last act.

HE (*smiling*)

I suppose if he didn't come in he'd be discharged.

SHE

It pleases *you* now to be humorous, though the consequences may be serious—for you.

HE (*resentful*)

And for you.

SHE (*lightly*)

Oh, no—only divorce for me; and, popularly speaking, that is good advertising.

HE

Good heavens! You are treating my love as a joke!

SHE (*serious now*)

Exactly as you are treating my good name and my sense of decency.

HE

But I'm serious! We can go away now.

SHE

And my husband?

HE

Oh, this isn't a silly play, where the husband always does the wrong thing.

SHE (*meaningly*)

But suppose he did come; what would *you* do?

HE

Peggy, I tell you this is real life, not the stage. Things happen that way in plays only when the long arm of coincidence is stretched out to its full length.

SHE

But nature sometimes imitates art. What *would* you do?

HE (*coming close to her*)

I'd fight him for you. I'd take you in my arms—like this—

(*He takes her in his arms and gives her a long kiss, but this time she struggles.*)

SHE (*finally releasing herself and pushing him away*)

How dare you? Without going into heroics, I've tried to show you that you must not do that; tried to stop you that you might save your self-respect—that this might not be the end of it all. But it *is* the end.



HE (*with force*)

By God, it isn't! You're a woman and I'm a man, and I love you!

(*He tries to take her in his arms again. She stops him.*)

SHE

How dare you? You've said I was a good woman; you've heard what I just said, and yet again you try to take me in your arms. (*Sadly*) You, who I thought understood, insult me—you, my friend!

HE

You belong to me, because I love you, and—because *you* love *me*. Tonight has shown us to each other. You're coming away with me.

SHE

And my husband?

HE

Damn your husband!

SHE (*suddenly starting*)

S-sh! What was that? It's he!

HE

No, you can't fool me that way. It was the maid or the butler.

SHE

But if it *were* he!

HE

Then, either he'll kill me or I'll kill him, because after tonight with you in my arms, my lips on yours, I can't, I won't go out of this room without you.

SHE (*whispering*)

The hall door slammed. It is he.

HE (*whispering*)

I believe it is.

(*He draws a revolver from his pocket and stands facing the door.*)

SHE (*throwing herself in his arms*)

No, no, Billy; you mustn't, you mustn't!

HE

Why not? It doesn't matter.

SHE

It does matter, because I love you!

HE (*happily*)

You love me? I'll win, then. I've got to win.

SHE (*clinging close*)

I love you, Billy, I love you!

HE (*very slowly*)

If he won't give you to me I'll kill him as he stands there.

SHE (*sobbing*)

I love you!

(*With her in his arms and a revolver in his hand HE stands facing the door. THE OTHER MAN comes in from the alcove.*)

THE OTHER MAN

Bully!

HE (*with a complete change of manner*)  
Hello!

SHE (*turning around and coming to THE OTHER MAN, likewise with a complete change of manner*)

Oh, hello! How did you get in?

THE OTHER MAN

Fixed it up with your maid. I wanted to watch your scene without your knowing it.

SHE (*laughing*)

You came in at the psychological moment.

THE OTHER MAN (*smiling*)

Yes. I was the husband.

HE

Whom have you got to play him?

THE OTHER MAN (*enthusiastically*)

Engaged a corker tonight. He'll rehearse tomorrow.

SHE

Let's finish the act. Where were we?

THE OTHER MAN

Oh, no; tomorrow'll do. It was bully of you to have this private rehearsal of that scene of mine. Thanks.

SHE (*enthusiastically. Going to THE OTHER MAN*)

Well, you're a dear of an author to write me such a part. I love it—every word.

(*She kisses him.*)

HE

I like my part, too—(*looking at her*)—especially the kissing scenes. Any criticisms?

THE OTHER MAN

Nothing that we can't easily fix at rehearsal. The play needs a bit of cutting here and there.

(*Turning to her.*)

By Jove, you hit me all right in that speech about quitting it all! But there is one thing. If you don't mind, will you go back to the scene where—um—what's the line? Oh, I remem-

ber: "No, no, Billy; you mustn't." I'd like you both to run through it again.

*(He and She start to take the same positions they had in the same scene previously.)*

Oh, just a moment! May I 'phone down for some cigarettes and a drink?

*(He has crossed to the desk and picked up the telephone.)*

SHE

You can't; it's only a property 'phone.

*(She runs, takes it from him and puts it over on the mantel.)*

HE

Like my revolver. *(Taking his pipe from his pocket and holding it up.)* Good old briar.

*(He puts it in his mouth and blows through it.)*

SHE

Let's do the scene now.

*(She takes the same position as when the scene was first played. He does likewise.)*

SHE *(throwing herself in his arms)*

No, no, Billy; you mustn't, you mustn't!

HE *(holding her)*

Why not? It doesn't matter.

THE OTHER MAN *(interrupting)*

One minute, please.

*(They relapse into conventional, normal positions. To her.)*

Put your head on his other shoulder, down stage, so that the audience can see your face. *(Smiling)* You're the leading lady.

*(She puts her head on his shoulder nearest the audience.)*

SHE *(conversationally)*

Is that better? *(Then, emotionally, as in the earlier scene.)* It does matter, because I love you, because I love you!

*(The curtain begins to descend, and the author sits down comfortably as if to watch the rehearsal.)*

HE

You love me. I'll win, then. I've got to win.

SHE *(clinging close and sobbing)*

I love you, Billy, I love you!

THE OTHER MAN, *leaning back, smoking, silently applauds, and*

THE CURTAIN IS DOWN



## THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT

By JOHN KENDRICK BANGS

"**L**OVE me little, love me long"—  
That is not my style of song.

Riches may be very sweet,  
But for love they are not meet.

Bring no maiden unto me

Who is out for l. s. d.

Rather bless me with the sort

That will love me when I'm short.



**I**F man were not vain the power of woman would cease.

# WOMAN'S RIGHTS

By EDWIN WILDMAN

"WELL, I think it's disgusting," said Felicia, lowering the paper.

"What, dear?" Bertie looked up. Concern was plainly visible in his big blue eyes. They had been married only a week and were on their wedding tour.

"Listen."

Felicia adjusted the morning paper so that the strong sunlight that flooded the east window of their parlor did not blind her, and read:

"'Babe Corrigan struck out with his right hook and landed Mike in the hopper'— What's the 'hopper,' Bertie?"

"The stomach, dear."

"—'Then Mike handed Babe an upper that grazed his talking machine and drew blood on the kisser'— It's simply sacrilegious!"

Bertie's mouth puckered sympathetically.

"Yes, sweetheart."

"—'but Mike came back hard and buffed the kiddie a knocker in the escutcheon. Rafferty rang time. The blood was painting landscapes on Babe's picture card'— Isn't it horrid!"

"If you say so, precious, but, you know, men are naturally fighters, and if they didn't fight in the ring they would get into brawls in the street."

"Well, when the women vote we'll put a stop to all this."

"Why, Felicia!" Bertie's blue eyes fairly popped out of his head. "You are not a—a—Suffragist!"

"Yes, I am."

"Felicia!"

"Don't 'Felicia' me! I *am* a Suf-

fragist, and I don't believe in fighting, and I think it is not manly. It's just animal. That's what it is, and that's the trouble with you men—you are two-thirds animal anyway."

The tears came into Mrs. Burleigh's eyes, and her husband rose and walked the floor, his hands thrust deep into the pockets of his new lavender trousers. It looked like a quarrel, and Bertie proposed to avoid it, if possible.

"Oh, you can relapse into silent contempt if you want to, Bertie Burleigh, but I believe in woman's rights; and what Mrs. Hardiman says is true—"

"Mrs. Hardiman!"

"Yes; she is the president of the Equality League, and she told me that I'd find out before I'd been married a week that all men were brutes. She said they looked upon women as play-things!"

Felicia's voice had risen to C sharp. Bertie closed the transom.

"Sweetheart—" he murmured.

"Don't 'sweetheart' me! Don't pet me—I won't be just a man's play-thing. I want to be something *individual*; I want to stand for something myself, not just a married nobody."

"Why, Felicia, you are not feeling well."

"That's the way with you men. If a woman dares to assert herself, to have any ideas, you say she is ill, that she isn't 'right.' You men won't meet the issue open and fair."

Bertie withdrew from the window, where he had been blinking in the sunlight. He sat down in the chair opposite his bride.

"Now, dear, I *will* meet the issue and we'll talk it over. You shall not say

to Mrs. Hardiman that I wasn't fair about it."

"Well," Felicia pouted, "do you believe in those horrid prize fights?"

"Dearie, I never attended but one, but I think that, as a test of masculine prowess, they are superb—that is, they are, perhaps you might call them, a necessary evil. They give the opportunity to certain extreme types of athletic men to express themselves and work out their physical vigor upon each other. Yes, my dear, I must admit that I think they are necessary."

Felicia looked intently at her husband as he delivered himself. Her eyes grew larger and larger and her cheeks flamed.

"Then, Bertie Burleigh, I married a brute!"

Bertie tried to be calm. He mustered up all his self-control and replied softly:

"If it weren't for the brute element in man, women in this country would be unprotected from the vicious in the elemental man."

That sounded like horse sense to Bertie, and he thought the best of the argument was his.

"Elemental man!" Felicia sniffed. "Elemental man was tamed before the flood. You're silly. If it weren't for the heroism of woman, man wouldn't exist. It's woman's strength that keeps the world going. Women can become prize fighters, weight lifters and circus performers if they want to, and when they do they outshine men every time—"

"Only because they are women—out of place; hence, a curiosity."

Bertie's anger was rising.

"Oh, of course! Women who do men's work in the fields are curiosities, aren't they? Women who work all day over a washtub and get their husbands' suppers and then stay up half the night attending sick children—they are curiosities. Women who churn butter, cook the meals, milk cows and iron their husbands' clothes until midnight—they're curiosities, aren't they? Bertie Burleigh, you're a fool!"

The dew was gathering over the blue of Felicia's eyes despite the vehemency of her words.

"Where did you get all these ideas? And where have you kept them?" Bertie gasped.

"I've always had them, Bertie Burleigh. Just because I'm a soft little thing and wear baby blue and pink chiffon and fluff my hair and do fancy work—and married you—you think I haven't any brains in my head."

"Why, Felicia!"

"Why, Felicia"—is that all you can say? Didn't Joan of Arc free France?"

Bertie had a sense of humor, and it got the better of him. He smiled.

"You'd better read history, Bertie Burleigh." Felicia's lips were puckered most enticingly. Bertie kissed them, in spite of a struggle.

Felicia freed herself and backed across the room. She stamped a small gray suede shoe.

"I won't stand it! I won't!" The voice had gone up to C sharp again. "You've got to listen to me, and you've got to acknowledge woman's rights in the world or we shall never be happy. Just because you are big and strong and I am tiny and weak, you think you can cow me. You've got to treat women as you do men in the future."

Bertie looked out the window hard.

"It's beautiful out, dear. Let's take a horseback ride up the mountain road. The view is superb there. You can see away across the Virginia mountains. We can get back in time for lunch, and we will talk it all over as we ride."

The day was perfect. Felicia loved horseback riding more than anything else. Her husband knew that, and, besides, an idea had suddenly possessed him.

"Will you order the horses, Bertie?" was all she said.

"I'll send the stable man here, my dear, and you can tell him about the kind of horse you prefer. I'll meet you on the veranda," Bertie replied, going into his own room, carelessly drawing the door after him. He was

soon heard whistling as he donned his riding suit.

Felicia's brows contracted. Then her lips set and she called her maid. After a time she heard the door close between Bertie's room and the outer hall. At the hotel office he called up the stable and ordered a horse, and told the groom to call at his apartment and take instructions from his wife. He said that she had her own ideas about the kind of horse she wanted, and to be sure and carry out her wishes.

Then he strolled into the café and lighted a cigar.

Hot Springs was never more beautiful. It was just the wane of the Southern season, and the place was comfortably full. The Northern rush had not begun, and the Southern contingent was beginning to thin out. The late August air was clear and crisp, and the sky was cloudless.

Burleigh met several men of his acquaintance and they strolled out on the glass-inclosed veranda, and a political discussion soon engrossed their attention. Mr. Taft had politicalized the Springs, and the influence of his recent visit colored the days that followed.

"There is one problem that Taft will be up against that is not on the boards," remarked a Colorado politician, the Hon. Wayne Crawley.

"And that?" Bertie questioned.

"The Suffragist question."

The men all laughed, except Bertie.

"How will that affect Taft?"

"I don't mean in the campaign," continued the Hon. Wayne Crawley, "but I mean afterward."

"How does it work in Colorado?" one asked.

"Too successful—to please us," he replied *sotto voce*. "And that is the reason the women in New York State and everywhere will make"—the Hon. Wayne glanced over his shoulder and put on the soft pedal—"a blamed nuisance of themselves. They will storm the Capitol and the White House—mark my word! Why, the Coxe army won't be in it. I tell you they are militant!"

A hall boy entered, calling Bertie's name.

"Mrs. Burleigh is waiting on the veranda. The horses have come," he announced when Bertie identified himself as the personage sought.

"Tell her I'll be there shortly," he said, then turned to the Hon. Wayne. "Is that the worst phase of it?" he asked, smiling.

"No," emphatically retorted the Colorado politician. "The worst phase of it is that they will get, and have got, a lot of sap-headed men to believe in the idea, or, at least, make capital of it, either for peace at home or to sell their newspapers or to get money out of them."

"Don't the men out in Colorado approve of suffrage?" Bertie asked. "The ones who want office?"

"Well, that's the trouble—they've turned the primaries into ice cream festivals and the caucuses into sewing societies and the polls into afternoon teas. We'll all be wearing skirts yet."

The messenger returned. "Mrs. Burleigh wishes you to come at once," he announced.

"I'll be there directly." Bertie relighted his cigar. "So you think the idea impractical?" he asked.

"Impractical!" roared the Hon. Wayne. "It's unsexing!"

Everyone exploded, except Bertie. He rose, nodded and left the table.

His wife was waiting on the veranda. Her eyes were flashing and her lips trembled a little, Bertie thought.

"Do you think it will storm?" he asked the groom as he leaped into the saddle.

"Storm?" The groom looked skyward. "No, sir—but you never can tell." He caught Mrs. Burleigh's expression, too.

"Aren't you going to—" she began, then stepped quickly into the saddle as the groom held her horse close alongside the high veranda.

They rode along in silence for a time. Felicia's cheeks were burning. She never looked more beautiful and jaunty than in her snugly fitting riding habit. She was not of those who rode astride.

Her skirt hung gracefully from the waist, and she presented a most attractive picture as she sat easily in the saddle, used from childhood to horses and riding to the hounds.

"We'll have a jolly fine ride today, Felice," Bertie essayed after they swung into the bridle path that led up from the main road toward the mountain top.

"My name is Felicia—at least that's the name you married me by," she replied. "I don't like to be called 'Felice,' as if I were some stable boy or porter you were addressing." The color heightened and her whip came down upon the horse's thighs.

The animal jumped and lowered his head.

"He doesn't like that, Felicia, but I guess he's not dangerous. At any rate, you can manage him. I'll gallop this brute on a bit; he won't be any good until he's had his head once."

Bertie's horse took the lead and he shot down the path at high speed. Felicia stuck her spurs in gently and her horse broke into a gallop and followed. It was a half-mile canter to a little plateau along the mountainside, and the view was so enticing there that Bertie stopped and looked across the green valley, giving his horse a breathing spell.

When Felicia came up she did not stop, but cantered by at full speed. Bertie smiled quizzically, but decided to enjoy the view a little longer. When Felicia was well out of sight down the heavily shaded path, he started after her. The road began to ascend, and it was really too steep to more than let his horse take a fast walk. He did not see Felicia again until he came out of the woods on the table-land that flattened the crest of the range. She had dismounted and was standing by the side of a huge bowl. She seemed to be in search of something in the grass by the roadside, holding her horse by the rein.

Bertie dropped from his horse and stood nearby. The view here was matchless. As far as the eye could reach the peaks of the distant moun-

tains fell off to the south. Below were deep valleys and in the nearest was a small settlement of mountain farmers. The hills were heavily wooded and the autumnal foliage was rich and enticing to the eye.

Felicia seemed indifferent to the scene. Her attention was centered upon the ground at her feet.

"Do you really think women should vote, dear?"

It seemed totally irrelevant; but Bertie had said he would face the question, and he had no intention of evading.

Felicia withdrew her eyes from the ground and looked her husband squarely in the face.

"Yes." There was just a shade of defiance, a dash of challenge and a bit of appeal in her answer.

"And assume all the responsibilities that belong to the franchise?"

"Why not?"

"Fight?"

"As if that was the most important thing on earth! There wouldn't be any war if women had the say."

"But men do not plunge into war; it is inevitable in the evolution of races."

"Because men made it so."

"How would voting prevent it?"

Felicia's eyes returned to the grass and her boot kicked up a bit of sod.

"Answer me, dear. We are practical 'men' now."

"How can anyone tell how a thing will be prevented in the future? Can men do that?"

"They can prepare to meet a condition."

"Well, can't the men fight just as well then as they do now? Haven't women done their part? Haven't they borne men to fight? Haven't they worked at home while the men fought—haven't they done their share?"

"Yes, Felicia, but is it their share to vote for others to fight? To have the power to elect a woman President, who will be commander-in-chief of the army and navy—to—"

"Wasn't Queen Victoria commander-in-chief of the army and navy?"

"We are living in a republic, purchased by the blood of men."

"And the suffering of women— Oh! My horse has got away!"

But Bertie was absorbed in the view. Felicia ran down the path. The animal was browsing contentedly by the roadside, but her hurried approach flushed him and he shied off as she approached.

"Whoa!" she called. The animal stopped and then wheeled around suddenly. Felicia caught him by the head as he started to trot away. She clung valiantly to his neck. Bertie quickly hitched his horse to a tree and followed in hot pursuit, but Felicia finally got hold of the bridle and stopped the animal several rods down the path.

"Are you hurt, darling?" Bertie gasped, out of breath.

"Bertie Burleigh, you are a brute! Mrs. Hardiman was right. All men are brutes—after they marry," she gasped.

"I am sorry, dear."

Felicia was struggling to mount. Every time she got her foot in the saddle the animal swung around.

"Let me help you, dear."

But Felicia was obdurate.

"Thank you, I can mount without the assistance of any man." Her voice trembled a little. Her cheeks here pink, oh, so beautiful, Bertie thought, and her eyes flashed fire. She never looked so pretty. Bertie stood watching in mute admiration, a slight smile on his lips.

"And besides, Bertie Burleigh," she flashed, as she finally succeeded in lifting herself in the saddle, "I don't know why I married, anyway, at least, *you*—and I am going home tonight. Good-bye." The spurs struck deep and the animal reared, then took the path at a racing pace and dashed away at full gallop.

"Felicia!"

But one might as well have called to the wind. Felicia was a horse-woman of no mean accomplishment. Her muscles were strong and she knew how to ride. Bertie thought that as she passed from sight.

"I guess Crawley is right. They'd put us in petticoats," he murmured. It took all the strength of will within him not to follow, but Robert Burleigh was not a weak man. No weak man could have won Felicia. It had taken more than persistence to wrench the reluctant avowal of her love. It had taken brute force—the kind of brute force that had won him triumphs on the gridiron and in the field. Cruelty, tenderness, neglect, constancy, fickleness and jealousy were the arms he had variously employed to awaken the love that she had given him, but this rightster business—it staggered him. It was a cloud in a clear sky, a new force he had not counted on. How to master it puzzled him. Bertie did not want to be known as "Mrs. Burleigh's husband," nor did he want to be unreasonable. Felicia had a mind of her own—he never doubted that; but it was the feminine charm, the sweet tenderness of her moods, her gentleness, her beauty, her brilliancy of wit and her keen intuitions—those were what he loved!

He told himself these things and much more, as he let his horse walk along the path over the hills, for he had no idea of following Felicia, who had taken the road back toward the hotel. Not that, of all things. That she would carry out her threat was preposterous; besides, it wasn't consistent. If she was in earnest about her views and would meet the issue squarely, he would give her every chance to convince him. He wasn't irreconcilable nor unreasonable, but if these women expected to convince anyone of the idea that they should vote, they certainly couldn't expect to begin by a threat. It wasn't sense, and Felicia was, after all, sensible; he felt sure of that.

Bertie was not happy in his course. No young man, madly in love with his bride, can view with equanimity a love tiff. These are monstrous things in the flush of early married days. They seem to bring Heaven and earth to a full stop and make life very somber and void. The more Bertie thought



of it the more miserable he became. More than once he was inclined to turn about and take up the pursuit. Even his horse seemed to realize that all was not as it should be, for he swung his head around and pricked up his ears; he, too, missed the companionship of his comrade, but Bertie was resolute.

Pursuit was well enough before marriage; it was man's prerogative. But the battle was won, and to weaken at the first signs of mutiny would spell disaster to his married life. His man's nature told him that. There was a rising throb in his throat as he thought of Felicia dashing off alone through the wooded road back down the mountain side. What if something should happen— God! His heart stood still! A horse was running down the road toward him. He drew the rein so quickly that the animal under him nearly stumbled in turning. The approaching horse was riderless. The blood tingled madly through his veins and seemed to freeze as a chill swept over his forehead. The rein was flapping in front of the runaway animal. Felicia must have been thrown over the horse's head. He dropped to the ground. As the animal came near it stopped and whinnied to its mate. If the beast could only talk!

Bertie grasped the rein, remounted and started at full gallop back down the trail. The dirt flew under his horse's hoofs. He seemed to need no urging. He seemed to be conscious that something unusual had happened. The road was steep, but he thrust his spurs into the horse's side. The riderless animal followed almost abreast. It was a mad ride, and the lather soon gathered around the saddle blanket and on the animal's neck. Bertie's eyes were intent upon the road ahead. His heart seemed literally in his throat.

"Felicia, Felicia, my darling little wife!" he murmured half audibly.

A bend in the path brought him near the mountain top where they had quarreled. Oh, if he had only had more patience! If he hadn't been so brutal! He cursed Crawley, whose

words had influenced his course. He belabored Mrs. Hardiman, who had put foolish ideas into Felicia's mind. He blamed himself the most of all. These thoughts were running through his mind like a horrible nightmare when suddenly, as he came out upon the plateau at the very top of the mountain, he saw Felicia. She was standing by the big bowlder, exactly as she had stood before. She hardly looked up, though she must have heard the mad gallop of the horses up the hill.

"Felicia, dear!" he shouted, and his voice was so strange and hoarse he hardly recognized it.

She looked up and did not answer. Her blue eyes floated in an ocean of tears that ran down her dust-stained face.

The horses were of no consequence. Let them run over the cliff if they would! He leaped to the ground and caught her in his arms.

"My darling little wife! You are not killed?"

She smiled in her tears and buried her head on his shoulder as his strong arms held her close.

"I threw it in the grass here, sweetheart."

"Threw it—what, dear?"

Was her mind unsettled? A terrible fear settled upon him.

"You are not hurt, my sweet?"

He stepped back a pace and looked at her.

"My wedding ring—I was going to throw it over the cliff after—" but her voice choked.

"Felicia!"

"I am very wicked."

"You were going to throw it away?"

His voice was unsteady.

"But it slipped out of my hand. I was hunting for it when you came up before."

"My poor darling!"

"I came back to find it. Oh—" and her sobs swallowed up her speech. "I couldn't go back without it—I couldn't, dear Bertie. I love you so—"

But Bertie was down on his knees. The grass was long and thick. Felicia's foot had trampled it in mats,

and the earth was dug up as if ground moles had been at work.

With a little scream, Felicia dropped to the ground. "There it is!" and, covered with dirt and grass, she gathered the small shining thing to her lips and kissed it passionately. "Please put it on my finger, Bertie."

His face was sober now. He took the emblem of their joys and woes and placed it on her finger, dirt and grass and all.

The midday sun was lowering away to westward. It gleamed in Felicia's tumbled hair, blond and amber and beautiful as gold.

"I'll never speak to Mrs. Hardiman again," she murmured, pressing the shining little circle to her lips and smiling up at him.

"And the Hon. Wayne Crawley can go to—"

But Felicia's hand sealed Bertie's speech.



## OH, ABUSED WOMAN!

By SATANELLO

**I**F you have ceased to be in love, they call you inconstant.

If you don't know whom you love, or whether you love at all, they call you fickle.

If you don't choose to love at all, they call you indifferent.

If you love anyone else but the one they want you to love, they call you false, and only when you give yourself to him whom they think you ought to love are you called loyal.

Yours is a hard lot indeed, oh, woman.

It is not necessary nowadays for a brainy woman to advertise her cleverness by wearing her belt badly.

Above everything else in the world a woman admires moral courage in a man, but her knowledge of anatomy is so hazy that she thinks broad shoulders or big biceps may be the seat of the moral virtues.

When a woman turns over the leaves of the book of love she never places a bookmark in it, but rather enjoys beginning anew each time.

A woman can manage to keep her love a secret, but never her hate.

Nothing is more painful to a woman than when she reaches the conclusion that she is no longer dangerous.

Men continually study women, and know nothing about them; women never study men, and know them all.

# PAR FIL SPECIAL

Par LOUIS PAYEN

**L**E petit village de Brixen s'étagait au flanc de la montagne avec un pittoresque de bon opéra comique. Les maisons se chevauchaient l'une l'autre, impatientes de ciel, dirait-on; les rues étroites escaladent l'azur à menus bonds pressés entre des marches grossières de cailloux pointus, et le bourg tout entier à l'air d'un décor moyenâgeux, bien machiné dans la lumière crue, avec les dentelures capricantes de ses toits, ses trous d'ombre subite et ses empâtements de lumière au ras des murailles.

La vie indolente doit avoir ici le goût d'une pastèque et fondre au creux des heures avec cette saveur fraîche dont persiste le souvenir parfumé.

Le hasard d'une correspondance manquée m'obligea à m'arrêter à Brixen. Je parcourais en touriste solitaire la frontière franco-italienne et je pris heureusement mon parti du repos qu'allait m'imposer une erreur d'horaire. J'eus vite fait cependant d'épuiser ce plaisir imprévu. L'ombre des rues courtes et toutes pareilles n'eut bientôt plus de mystère pour moi. Je savais que la maison suivante aurait le même aspect de vie nonchalante et sournoise que celle que je dépassais, avec sa façade crépie à la chaux et délavée par le temps, sa petite cour intérieure et sa montée d'escaliers à l'air libre entre les arceaux grossiers ou s'arc-boutent les murailles. . . . Ma promenade me ramena bientôt sur la place où l'église menue, avec sa petite cloche suspendue dans le ciel comme un bonnet de coton offert à Dieu, voisine le bureau de poste.

Puisque les cartes postales illustrées n'avaient pas épargné ce trou perdu, je

m'en étais muni et j'entrai au bureau pour les orner du "cordial souvenir," cher au voyageur. Un éblouissement m'arrêta sur le seuil, comme si la Madone ou la Vierge païenne d'une de ces toiles que je venais de contempler à d'innombrables exemplaires le long des cimaises italiennes se fût tout à coup matérialisée devant moi. Au dessous du grillage, dans l'encadrement du guichet, une femme écrivait. Elle avait à peine levé les yeux au bruit qu'avait fait la porte en tournant, et, maintenant, les yeux baissés, le buste incliné, elle continuait son travail, sans s'occuper de ma présence.

Devant mes cartes étalées, tout en tracant les adresses et les phrases banales, je la détaillais avec ferveur. Sa peau nette et mate avait ce grain particulier de douceur ambrée que donne le soleil aux filles du Midi; sous les paupières un peu lourdes aux longs cils baissés, je revoyais le regard des yeux magnifiques et sombres. La chevelure massive descendait en deux ondes égales vers les oreilles à demi cachées et l'ovale du visage s'affirmait délicieusement aux pentes satinées des joues, à la rondeur savante du menton sous une bouche aux lèvres violentes comme un trait de pourpre.

Je sentais un désir furieux battre mon cœur, un de ces désirs souverains qui ne vous laissent aucune trêve jusqu'à ce que vous les ayez réduits à votre merci; mais je mesurais en même temps les difficultés de l'aventure où je voulais impatiemment m'engager.

Oserai-je lui parler? . . . Mon trouble m'interdisait toute audace directe. Un moment, je songeai à écrire, et à glisser le billet en achetant les timbres dont

j'avais besoin. Je compris qu'elle ne lirait et ne prendrait même pas ma lettre. Alors une idée folle me traversa l'esprit. . . . Je pourrais ainsi tout risquer, et il lui serait impossible de se dérober à mon aveu, puisque je me servais pour le lui faire de sa fonction elle-même. J'écrivis hâtivement :

"LUCIEN BARNY,

"36 bis, boulevard Saint-Germain, Paris.

"Cher ami, je t'envoie ce télégramme de Brixen, en face d'une inconnue dont la vue vient de bouleverser mon cœur. Je voudrais pouvoir lui exprimer mon trouble. Je n'ose le faire et ne sais comment lui apprendre mon amour. Conseille-moi. Dois-je oser, attendre ou partir? Réponds de suite, télégraphe restant. Amitiés.

"DANIEL SIRVAIN."

Je m'inclinai devant le guichet :

— Pardon, madame, dis-je d'une voix qui tremblait un peu, voici un télégramme, avec réponse payée.

Elle leva les yeux, prit la feuille et, du bout de sa plume, se mit à suivre les lignes en comptant les mots, s'arrêtant parfois pour déchiffrer mon écriture. Je suivais avec anxiété chacun de ses mouvements, la gorge sèche, les tempes battantes de fièvre, et j'espérais passionnément quelque signe, l'émoi d'un frémissement accueillant ou même d'une indignation. Mais rien ne tressaillit sur son visage immobile. Posément, elle compta les mots une seconde fois, et dit, d'une voix très calme, sans nuance :

— Cela fait trois francs vingt-cinq.

Puis elle ajouta :

— Pour combien de mots payez-vous la réponse?

— Autant qu'il y en a dans ce télégramme.

— Alors, monsieur, c'est six francs cinquante.

Tant de calme me déconcertait; j'osai pourtant dire, après avoir payé :

— Combien de temps pensez-vous que je doive attendre avant de repasser?

— En admettant que l'on vous réponde desuite, vous ne pouvez rien avoir avant deux heures.

— Merci, madame.

Je soulevai mon chapeau et sortis de ce bureau, où j'étais maintenant près de cette créature impassible. J'étais persuadé cependant qu'elle avait compris ma ruse et que ma dépêche n'irait pas chercher à Paris l'ami que j'avais inventé pour les besoins de ma cause; mais je m'épuisais à imaginer les raisons de son indifférence tout administrative. Il me semblait qu'elle aurait dû montrer quelque surprise reconnaissante d'un hommage aussi imprévu, et j'usai ma longue attente à des rêves où je sentais croître à chaque minute l'anxiété de mon désir.

À l'heure dite, je me présentai au guichet :

— La réponse à mon télégramme est-elle arrivée?

— Voici, monsieur.

Toujours aussi calme et l'air aussi lointain que tout à l'heure, elle m'avait tendu le petit carré bleu où s'inscrivait mon nom. Je l'avais pris, le cœur serré tout à coup, et, maintenant, à côté de la porte, immobile, je n'osais rompre le cachet fragile. Il me semblait, tant mon désir avait grandi, que tout mon destin était dans ce bout de papier et que j'y trouverais la félicité ou le malheur de ma vie. Pourtant, j'ouvris la dépêche, et je lus :

"DANIEL SIRVAIN,

"Télégraphe restant, Brixen.

"Cher ami, calme ton imagination et ne cherche pas à troubler une existence tranquille dont, sans doute, le calme désir ne va pas au delà du petit horizon qui la borne. Ce serait mal à toi, car la réalité trompe toujours les rêves les plus fous, et rien ne vaudrait la douceur d'un souvenir qui restera pur. Amitiés.

"LUCIEN BARNY."

Je levai les yeux. Elle me regardait maintenant, et je lus dans ses prunelles toute la beauté impossible de l'espoir; puis, son regard s'éteignit, elle se détournait lentement, se leva, et je sortis, tandis que sous ses doigts l'appareil télégraphique chantait avec un tic-tac monotone et irrégulier.

# THE DRAMA COMES INTO SEASON

By GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

THE drama, like the oyster, comes into season with the first autumn month having an "R"—September; but several recent cases of dramatic ptomaines suffered by early theatergoers from partaking of unripe productions seem to argue that equal caution should be exercised at the outset in approaching both the theater and the bivalve. Theatrical gastronomists, though deploring the necessity for dieting on light musical foods until the dramatic beds give up safer products, have come to realize and regard this condition as something that is rapidly becoming an established tradition.

Many reasons have been assigned from time to time for the ubiquity of failures at the beginning of a theatrical season, but a transcript of all the evidence would afford as tedious reading as an explanation of the unwritten law written for the columns of a Sunday-school paper. In every avenue or alley of journalism there are some things that ought to be left out. The only interesting statistics are vital statistics, and, even at that, race suicide, like brevity, is held to be the soul of wit by a considerable portion of the amusement-seeking public.

The September theatrical service was partly *table d'hôte*, in the cases of such already guaranteed and passed-on dishes as the left-over successes of last season, and partly *à la Carter* in the cases of such new and exciting nickel novel dark-lanternisms as "Arsène Lupin," "Detective Sparkes" and "The Sins of Society." The menu, including about thirty fresh dishes in all, was elaborated further by such

spicy *hors d'œuvres* as "The Only Law," such *entrées* and quick exeunts as the insufficiently cooked "The Revellers" and "The Flag Lieutenant," which might possibly come more accurately under the head of roasts, and such appetizing *pièces de résistance* as "The Fortune Hunter" and "Is Matrimony a Failure?" The musical program during the September dramatic dining hours was varied and interesting, such numbers as "Forget Me Not" and "All a Play" from "The Love Cure," "Sex Delicious" from "The Gay Hussars," the still beautiful "Rose of the World" from the rejuvenated "Rose of Algeria," and the lilting "Chocolate Soldier" and "Dollar Princess" tunes being worthy of all the applause that was bestowed upon them. And so, after sipping the retrospective *demi-tasse* and tallying up the drama check on the eve of the first of October, the general survey becomes more agreeable; the overcharges on patience, earlier in the month, are smiled away and good digestion waits on appetite for the things to come.

The most interesting fact connected with the new season is the revival of melodrama, which has been taking the unrest cure at Drury Lane for quite a period, and which now seems to have returned to America with a vengeance—an eminently appropriate manner, incidentally, in which the species of drama in question should return. Whether the thrill drama vogue will last long, however, is open to speculation, but, for my part, I must confess that I am a bear. Reviewers may expound upon exact "cycles" in theaterdom, and may seek to show that

certain styles of drama must inevitably come into popular favor at regular intervals, but I prefer to put my faith in the theory that there are no more precise "cycles" in the theater than there are in the foundling asylums. The trends in both are corollaries of accident. Cycle or sickle, however according to the constructive or destructive argument of the reader, melodrama came down the gang plank with the rising of the first curtains, as may be appreciated by a survey of the early productions.

In some instances the productions have been frank, through-and-through melodramas, while in other cases, where the general characterization has been ingeniously and carefully disguised under different captions, the melodramatics that have been secreted in them have not been able to remain long in hiding.

THE season's curtain of the Hackett Theater was pulled up on one of the increasingly ubiquitous plays "of New York life," this time entitled "THE ONLY LAW." If the dramatists continue playing on New York life much longer, New York life will need a piano tuner to get it back into shape again. And, in this vein, it might be in order to suggest that New York life is not bounded on the north by Rector's and on the south by the old Tenderloin police station, as we are being rapidly led to believe by these stage pictures. There certainly must be some life left in East Sixty-sixth Street or thereabouts, and only the other day we read in the newspapers that something had really happened as far up as Harlem. Last year Eugene Walter discovered that some people were still living in the latter district, but he could not resist the temptation long, and quickly hustled them downtown into the "life" part of the city.

Ever since Clyde Fitch introduced us to "The Woman in the Case," various brother playwrights have been introducing us successively to other women with cases, which circumstances have not altered to any considerable

degree. The moral from these divers dramas, if we want to accept the moral, is obvious. It is: No good woman can reside in the West Forties. Which, if it does not hurt certain feelings, must finally hurt real-estate values in the region in question. Or would "in questionable" be better?

"THE ONLY LAW," written by Wilson Mizner and George Bronson Howard, has to do with one of these women. Her name is Jean and she is blue, judging from her sighs and tears. The sawmill in this particular drama is replaced by a telephone that rings and is rung so incessantly through three acts that, at ten cents a call, it is not to be wondered at that the characters in the play are always hard up.

The plot of "THE ONLY LAW" is the plot of "The Easiest Way" somewhat turned about. There is the woman, in this case honestly termed a show girl instead of an actress, a broker who is very good instead of very naughty, and a second man, the other corner of the triangle, whose character may not be set down on clean white paper. But the woman loves this second man just the same, and buys him all his lavender socks and meals, the innocent broker serving as the check book. The Check Book wants to marry the show girl, but the latter, with exquisite fidelity to the true workings of "New York life," cannot think of such a thing. So she continues to get more money out of the Check Book and continues to hand it over to her won't-work lover, with whom she plans to run away to California. The lover, however, with eighteen thousand dollars of good unearned money in his pocket, plans to run away in the opposite direction, and in stateroom No. 17 there is to be a blonde. Jean, incidentally, is a brunette, which makes the situation somewhat incongruous. She finds out, of course, and, after the telephone has rung seven more times, virtue and Wall Street, really an odd combination, triumph.

In view of the character of the broker who, as Spider in the play puts it, "believes all women are like

his sister," and in view of the record of his show-girl bride, I am just curious enough to wish that the dramatists had written another act. Three days, according to the program, elapse between the first and second acts, and one day elapses between the second and third. Just about one day, too, according to my best guess, would elapse between the third and the extra act. The couple are planning to leave for Mexico at the fall of the final curtain, but, unless I am seriously mistaken, there would be a vacant chair in the Pullman long before the train got to its destination.

The drama, in spite of all this, is interesting, is replete with bright lines and gives promise of something infinitely superior from the future pens of its authors. Forrest Winant as MacAvoy, and L. M. Martell in the minute-long role of an expressman, gave splendid performances.

THE opening bill at Daly's was "BILLY," a very funny farce elaborated by Mrs. Sidney Drew from a sketch well known to vaudeville goers under the title of "Billy's Tombstones." We have had the nose dramatized in "Cyrano," the throat in "The Climax," the foot in "Trilby," green eyes in a play by Fitch and now teeth in "BILLY." The story of the farce concerns the loss of a set of false molars by the football lover hero during a trip to Havana, on which he is doing his best to persuade the girl to help him wrestle with the servant problem for the rest of their mutual lives. The entire action of the play occurs on the steamship *Florida*, and Edgar Atchison-Ely has the title role.

IN the third act of "SAMSON," Arthur Byron, in the role of Le Govain, lost his fortune in the stock market through the action of Brachard Gillette. In the third act of "THE RINGMASTER," which opened the season at the Maxine Elliott Theater, he had his revenge. In exactly eight minutes' time, he manipulated "Colorado Central" from 83 up to 300, gained control of the road and thus recouped his

stage-money fortune from the Bourse disaster in last year's Bernstein play. Mr. Byron's revenge did not surprise me, however, for, when he made his appearance in Act I with the same brown sack suit that he had worn in "Samson," I felt sure that he had some sly financial coup up his sleeve.

"THE RINGMASTER," by Olive Porter, and characterized as "An American Play of Today," is not unlike such American plays of yesterday as "The Lion and the Mouse," "The Henrietta," etc. Its plot has to do with a Wall Street battle, in which the two opposing factions are the girl's unscrupulous father and the man who loves the girl, but who, nevertheless, has an affinity in the shape of his "principles." The father, splendidly enacted by George Howell, is the ringmaster, at the crack of whose whip the whole financial world dances. He tries to enlist the aid of Le Baron in putting through a combine, but the latter, true to his promise to the ringmaster's daughter to arouse himself and *do* something, refuses to enter into the scheme because it is not a fair one. Then the fight begins, and, when it has ended, Le Baron has won not only the financial battle but also the girl, who is made to realize that the young Utopian financier, though he has fought against her father, has done what was right. The curtain falls as Eleanor Hillary tells Le Baron through her tears that she does not want him to leave her. The fact that they do not indulge in the usual embracing *finale* is one of the most refreshing things about the play.

The scene shown in Act II, a yacht plowing its way through the moonlit sea, is extremely attractive. The play, in general, must be criticized for its unnecessary loquacity.

"THE FLORIST SHOP," the initial offering at the Liberty, was undoubtedly a store of humor as originally written by Messrs. Engel and Horst, of Germany, but a great deal of this humor must have been lost during the process of adaptation by Oliver Herford. The farce was known in the



German as "Glück Bei Frauen," a title that promised much when the fact was taken into consideration that the same men who had given us "The Blue Mouse" were responsible for the antics back of this play. But the best-laid plans of Blue Mouse men gang aft agley, even though sometimes the fault be not theirs.

"THE FLORIST SHOP," however, is a better place to do amusement shopping in than was "The Candy Shop," the almost-musical institution that closed its own and the Knickerbocker Theater's doors last season. It tells a toned-down story of two young married couples and the efforts of the respective bridegrooms to live up to the ideals with which their wives have vested them. The first young wife believes her husband has been a gay Lothario before their marriage, and adores him all the more for it. The husband in point, on the contrary, has been a guy Lothario, and he has as much trouble in conjuring up a disreputable past for himself as the second husband, whose wife believes him to have been a champion goody-goody, has in conjuring his down.

The title given the American version of the farce is not nearly so *à propos* as the original title. The florist shop is an establishment in which various species of lingerie are slyly substituted for roses and violets, so that the young man who believes he is sending his lady love a rare bouquet is in reality sending her a nosegay of silk stockings. It has not much to do with the story, despite the fact that the colloquially inclined young woman who sat directly back of me ventured the opinion that the title might be intended to express the idea: "I love my wife, but oh, you orchid!"

DAVID BELASCO's newest production, "IS MATRIMONY A FAILURE?" has been advertised as follows: "If you should wake up some morning and find that your wife was not your wife at all—what would you do?" Although it seems that this would be a question for a hotel clerk to answer rather than a

theatergoer, the answer to the interrogatory title of the comedy itself has been affirmatively negative. The play, adapted by Leo Ditrichstein from the German, is a huge laughing success, splendidly acted by a company including Frank Worthing, Jane Cowl, Anne Sutherland, William Morris, W. J. Ferguson and James Bradbury. The story has to do with the sudden discovery by a group of suburbanites that their marriages were performed by a man who was without authority, and with the consequent results of their trying to shake off what Shakespeare must really have meant by the mortal coil—wedlock.

THE flag of "THE FLAG LIEUTENANT" was at half-mast during its brief New York engagement, and dearth of interest caused Charles Frohman to furl the production for the season. The play, like "An Englishman's Home," on which American audiences foreclosed the mortgage at the same theater last season, failed of popular success because of its too decidedly British trend. Mr. McRae's performance in the title role of Richard Lascelles, however, was as good a piece of work as he has ever done, and that is the nicest compliment that can be paid an actor who has few serious rivals for light comedy honors on our present stage.

THE unqualified success of "ARSENÈ LUPIN" carries with it the conviction that ticket speculators are not the only kind of thieves that have a firm hold on theatergoers. In this French detective-robber drama, a Holmes-Raffles combination, the interest in the battle of wits between the mysterious thief Lupin and the equally cunning Guérichard, a tricolor Pinkerton, is kept at such a Pole discovery pitch that the nearby cafés are losing their usual *entr'act* patronage. Not since the slowly ticking infernal machine threatened to blow the hero of "The Fatal Card" into eternity about ten years ago has there been a more gripping bit of dramatic trickery than the climacteric scene in the third act of this play.

Lupin has written that he will steal the necklace at midnight. In a barricaded room the detective and the Duke are awaiting his advent. The jeweled circlet is lying between them on a table. As the hour of twelve approaches, the detective cries out that he believes the Duke is Lupin. The Duke calmly answers that, for aught he may know, the detective is the famous thief. There is a dead pause. The first stroke of midnight rings out. Guerchard pulls his revolver. The Duke does the same. "Ah," shouts the detective, "why have *you* drawn a pistol?" The clock again strikes its even note. "You said we must be prepared for Lupin," smiles the Duke. And thus, with revolvers drawn across the necklace that the audience knows *will* be stolen as the thief has promised, the two men wait for the last clang of the clock.

The thrill of the scene is heightened by the splendid acting of William Courtenay and Sidney Herbert in the respective roles of the thief and his pursuer.

"DETECTIVE SPARKES" may be described as a farcical "Arsène Lupin," Miss Hattie Williams playing the part of Lupin and Julian Royce that of a suspicious Guerchard. Miss Lupin's sister, who is married to a Lord Axminster, loves, honors and obeys her husband by going up in a balloon one night with another man. The audience is not informed whether or not she stayed up all night—in the air and otherwise—but a dramatic *double-entente* makes it necessary at least for Miss Lupin to get hold of a telltale brooch that her sister has indiscreetly left in the basket and that, if found, must surely reveal the identity of the woman in the case. The efforts to get hold of the jewel and to conceal the facts of his wife's absence from Axminster form the plot of the play, in which all ends well when Miss Lupin assures her doubting brother-in-law that it was *she* who went up in the old-fashioned aeroplane with the wrong Mr. Wilbur Wright.

THE best thing in "THE DOLLAR MARK," which was heralded for many months as the Berry Wall of Wall Street plays, has nothing to do with either Wall Street or dollar marks. It comes in the third act, the scene of which is laid on the deck of a yacht moving out to sea, and consists of a few minutes of triangular emotionalism with Miss Pauline Frederick, Hassard Short and Cuyler Hastings as the three corners of the geometrical dramatic figure. Young Baylis, the weakling son of the multimillionaire, has married Millie Foster, a manicurist, without his father's knowledge. The father, annoyed at the presence of the girl on the yacht, and believing that she is trying to exercise her wiles over his son, commands him in the girl's hearing to "leave her alone." The young man moves to protest against his father's insult, when the girl steps between them. "And who—what are you?" sneers the elder Baylis. "I *was* a manicure; I *am* Mrs. Baylis," she replies quietly. And when Baylis forthwith disinherits his son, the little scene between the latter and the girl he has married, in which she tries to cheer him up and clear away the tear mist from his eyes with her promise to stick to him and help him fight the battle against the world, leaves the pleasantest memory of the evening. The play, written in George Broadhurst's most melodramatic vein, is plot heavy and replete with oratorical star-spangled-bannerisms, but nevertheless has a whole lot of colloquial qualities that make for popular success. It is just the sort of play to make a fortune on the road.

It was a pleasure to sit through that dainty comedy of the United States of Zenda, "SUCH A LITTLE QUEEN," firstly, because of its entertaining story; secondly, because of a wonderfully good portrayal by Miss Elsie Ferguson; and thirdly, because the play proved that the author, Channing Pollock, had lost none of the wit with which he used to infuse his dramatic reviews of other men's plays. The story of his play has

to do with the efforts of an exiled king and queen, who are forced to set about earning a living in a country where the only recognized royalty is the play broker's check for the last two weeks. Their experiences in a Harlem flat and in a busy downtown office, as well as with the unsympathetic common or Madison Square Garden variety of New Yorker, find a happy conclusion in their recall to the greatest castle in the world—home.

If you are a young man and "broke," go see "THE FORTUNE HUNTER" and learn the way to make a million dollars in one year without going to jail. The closed secret is this: In every small country town there is usually one heiress. Go to that town, dress well, appear diligent, attend church regularly and flash your nicely polished finger nails every once in a while. Result: The heiress will be yours. The open secret of the play is this: It is the best light play in New York; it marks the best acting of John Barrymore's career, and it raises Winchell Smith to James Forbes's class as a writer of good, straight, clean, laugh-filled American comedy.

IN the short twenty minutes before Charles Richman makes his entrance in "The Revellers," which he wrote for his own use, six characters preface his coming with such references to him as "that handsome fellow"—"that handsome brute." Intimacy is sometimes a sincere form of flattery, but this was so very intimate that it made the first-night audience feel like giving Mr. Richman a vanity box on the ear. The play deals with some more "New York life" and includes a Tenderloin beef-steak dinner, during which the hostess's honor is also at stake, at which, incidentally, it comes very near being burned by the villain toward the end of the festivities. Miss May Mackenzie, whose last professional appearance in public was in a drama at the Criminal Courts, contributes a subtle bit of acting at this exciting moment, in fact one of the most realistic pictures of a

woman who is shocked that I have ever seen on the stage.

"THE MELTING POT," after running an entire season in Chicago, opened the new Comedy Theater in New York early in the month, and was greeted by the newspaper critics in a contradictory fashion. The Chicago reviewers positively raved over the play, but their metropolitan brothers would not go so far as that. As a matter of fact, the edge had been taken off the play for New York by both "The House Next Door" and "Meyer and Son," dramas dealing with the same general theme of race coordination. But, viewed as a dramatized poem, "THE MELTING POT" is an interesting contribution to stage literature. Miss Chrystal Herne's performance in the role of Vera Revendal, the young Russian girl in love with Quixano, merits special notice and appreciation.

"THE BRIDGE," a play of labor, capital and love, by Rupert Hughes, similar in several ways to Charles Klein's drama, "Daughters of Men," opened the year at the Majestic Theater. Guy Bates Post is the leading player. The story concerns the issues of the employer and the employed, in this instance centered around a great railway bridge in the process of construction, the love of the bridge builder for his employer's daughter and the final bridging of the social chasm that is supposed to separate them. The construction of the real bridge shown in the second act is a fine piece of scenic realism. Mr. Post's portrayal of John Stoddard, master workman, is highly effective, and Shelley Hull, in a role of limited scope, gives every indication of being heard from in future dramatic fields.

ALTHOUGH, to use the phraseology of which many reviewers are so fond, "AN AMERICAN WIDOW" skates on thin ice, the assurance may be given that the estimable lady's foot never slips. Several times in the second act, however, she comes so near forgetting

the advice that was given to the young woman of Miss Lucy Weston's song that the feminine cheeks in the audience take on blushes of a deep exit light hue. The comedy, by Kellett Chambers, tells the story of a young widow, charmingly portrayed by Miss Grace Filkins, who is desirous of marrying a title, but who is forbidden to do so by a clause in her late husband's will that stipulates she shall forfeit his money if she takes any other than an American for her second best marital bet. The widow, accordingly, plans to become the temporary wife in name only of an American composer; to divorce him shortly after their wedding and to marry then, as her *third* husband, the titled Englishman. In the end, however, she finds that she loves her temporary husband more than the earl, and the latter tells her that he will seek the rainbow's end in Pittsburg. The play is well written and well built, and is as diverting a Franco-American farce as New York has seen in several seasons.

IN the Bijou Theater, over in Brooklyn, there was tried out during the month a play called "A ROYAL RUN-AWAY," by Edward Knoblauch, that attracted considerable attention because of the announcement that it is to be produced in a few months at the New Theater under the title, "A Cottage in the Air." The play—done by the Shubert stock company—is a light, romantic fantasy, and concerns a young princess, who tires of the empty conventionalities and banalities of her court, and who, on the eve of the announcement of her betrothal to the prince of a neighboring kingdom, runs away to a little village in England, where her subsequent futile efforts to "help mankind" prove to her that the cottage in the air which she longed for is not as desirable, after all, as an heir in her castle at home. Miss Olive Wyndham, who played the Princess Priscilla of Lothen-Kunitz, showed great improvement over her work in "The Man from Home," and, by her splendid interpretation, infused with a

convincing naturalness and gratifying restraint, won for herself fairly a place in the New Theater company. Robert Dempster, as the Prince, again demonstrated that he is as efficient a handler of young romantic roles as we have on the stage today. There is one line in the play that deserves to be chronicled, if only for its suggestion of the wit of Wilde: "When a man gets what he wants, he grows tired; when a woman gets what she wants, she wakes up."

LILLIAN RUSSELL, the American contender for the laurels of that female Ponce de Leon of Paris, Ninon de l'Enclos, made her 1909 metropolitan bow in a comedy of Wall Street, by Edmund Day, called "THE WIDOW'S MIGHT." It has become the custom of reviewers to review Miss Russell's permanent pulchritude instead of the play in which she happens to make her appearance, and the former has been voted a success so consistently that opinions as to the latter are of no consequence. In this particular instance, however, it may be said that the play makes a good frame for the American Jersey Lillian, and boasts a sort of "College Widow" *finale* that, in this case, does with the stock ticker what George Ade did with the football.

JOHN DREW has been referred to by one critic as "the male Lillian Russell." The characterization is apt. Men may come and men may go, but Drew keeps on forever—a perennial matinée idol. And so, in his case, too, it matters little what the play is, so long as he is in it. This season he is appearing in a three-act comedy, "INCONSTANT GEORGE," an adaptation of "L'Ane de Buridan," written by the authors of "My Wife." Reveling in smart, scintillating dialogue, the play, despite its flimsy plot, is the most amusing and laugh provoking that the well-tailored Frohman star has appeared in in the last three years. "A woman reserves the words 'my dear' for the men whose lives she seeks to embitter," and "What egotists men are who marry only one woman—what

selfishness they show in regard to the happiness of others!" are samples of the play's wit. This wit, together with the fact that John Drew appears in pale blue pajamas and, as a friend of mine expresses it, is made violent love to by a board of directiores, should guarantee "INCONSTANT GEORGE" a constant vogue.

If you have married a second time, and if your first wife, whom you have divorced, has married your business rival, and if the son of the latter, who, incidentally, was once engaged to your present wife, wants to marry your nineteen-year-old daughter, what relation, if this last marriage occurs, will you be to your first wife? That is the riddle Thompson Buchanan has dramatized under the title of "THE INTRUDER." In this, his second play, Mr. Buchanan has again evolved a woman's role that compels as much sympathy as did that of his Marian Stanton, the wife fighting for her husband's love, in "A Woman's Way." The role in point is the role of the intruder, the young second wife, who comes into Chase's hostile home and is forced to battle against the prejudices of his daughter and win over the stubborn girl's affection. The part of the youthful stepmother, as played by Miss Janet Beecher, carries with it a note so sincere, so appealing, that it alone, if nothing else, makes the latest Buchanan comedy a welcome, though brief, intrusion.

FOLLOWING in the wake of "THE GAY HUSSARS," the new musical plays began to attract music lovers and the bald-headed coterie with midwinter magnetism. "A BROKEN IDOL," with novel scenic effects and a good-looking assemblage of half-portion chorus girls, "THE ROSE OF ALGERIA," with its prettiest of all recent scores, and "IN HAYTI," with McIntyre and Heath, drew the early autumn crowds off the roof gardens. "THE LOVE CURE," with its superb staging, interesting story and dreamy song, "THE CHOCOLATE SOLDIER," with its pretentious music

and general daintiness, and "THE DOLLAR PRINCESS" all registered successes of a not-to-be-doubted character. And Sam Bernard, who came into New York toward the close of the month in "THE GIRL AND THE WIZARD," followed in favoring Fortune's footsteps.

We know that tears always follow a Battle, so it was quite natural that Miss Margaret Anglin should follow Wilton Lackaye at the Savoy Theater. As the central figure in a somewhat somber dramatization of Mrs. Margaret Deland's lachrymose best seller, "THE AWAKENING OF HELENA RICHIE," this commanding actress has added another leaf to the laurel crown that proclaims her the czarina of Dramaland's tyranny of tears. Supported by a competent company that includes Master Raymond Hackett, who is almost as good a child actor as little John Tansey, Miss Anglin visualizes the well-known character of the novel with a *finesse* sufficiently exquisite in itself to justify amply its having been transferred from the book shelf to the stage.

THE Duke of Hermanos, in the new Mangham Victorian farce, "THE NOBLE SPANIARD," gives Robert Edeson another of the brunette roles that he so dearly loves to portray. Its foreign nature, however, comes as something of a gentle shock after the series of Indian, West Pointer, Northwest trader and similar native son characters with which his name has become associated. Nevertheless, as the titled Spaniard, whose actions indicate that he believes love should laugh at husbands as well as at locksmiths, Mr. Edeson gives a performance that has not been rivaled in recent years by exponents of refined farce. The play itself is not overburdened with interest, but is sufficiently amusing to while away a leisure evening. The story it tells may be summed up thus: Faint heart ne'er won fair lady, but strong heart—yes! Which latter gives the theme an eminently appropriate Edeson slant.

# WHAT ABOUT NIETZSCHE?

By H. L. MENCKEN

WHAT about old Friedrich Nietzsche? Who was he, anyhow, and what did he teach? Was he a Socialist or an Anarchist, a Low German or a Bavarian, a man or a devil? Is it true that he died of the jim-jams, chained to the floor and calling on the gods he had reviled to save him from Hell? Is it true that he and Richard Wagner were at first close friends, thenmorganatic brothers-in-law, and after that murderous foes? When did he live, and where? What did he write? When and why did they hang him?

All of these questions demand answers, for Nietzsche has been breaking into print of late with conspicuous assiduity. The theological reviews denounce him in every issue as a natural son of Judas Iscariot and Loretta Borgia. The yellow journals connect him with "waves of crime" and "the decay of the churches"—spelling his name Nietzsche, Neitzche, Nitshe, Neatzsche, Nitysche, Nittsche, Neitzshy, Nitschie, Nietzsche and Niscksy, according to their degrees of ignorance. In the uplift magazines he is becoming as prominent as Dr. Woods Hutchinson and Judge Ben B. Lindsay. In the New York *Nation*—last stronghold of the Harvardocentric theory of the universe—his name is mentioned in the same paragraph with those of immortal Rollos and Waldos. Only the *Ladies' Home Journal* and the *War Cry* have yet to find him out.

Of books about him there threatens to be no end. The German book stores range them on long shelves—fat, squat tomes by professor-doctors of Leipzig, Berlin and Bonn; three-

volume commentaries; racy books of unauthentic reminiscence and biography; innumerable pamphlets by disciples sane, semi-sane, quasi-sane and insane. In France they put his philosophy into novels and plays; in Russia they translate it into terms of nitroglycerin; in Italy the wilder youngsters write Nietzschean poetry, denounce Dante as an ass and call themselves "futurists." Mexico, Finland, Sweden, Belgium, Greece, Servia, Scotland and Turkey have Nietzschean propagandists, book writers, bellwethers and spellbinders. Even the United States has produced two books on Nietzsche—one a syllabus for college students who can't read German, and the other a more elaborate interpretation for those who can't understand it when they read it.

The Nietzschean headquarters for Great Britain seem to be in Edinburgh, where a publisher named T. N. Foulis keeps his presses roaring with Nietzsche translations and commentaries. He has just begun the publication of a complete English version of all the great immoralist's writings, in eighteen volumes octavo. Four of these are now on my desk. One contains Nietzsche's early critical essay, "THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY" (2s. 6d.), translated by Wm. A. Haussmann, Ph.D., and with an introduction by Frau Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, the philosopher's devoted sister and biographer. Two others are made up of the papers which Nietzsche called "Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen," or "THOUGHTS OUT OF SEASON" (2s. 6d. each); and the fourth is a revised translation of "BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL," by Helen Zimmern,

with an introduction by that feverish Nietzschean, Thomas Common (3s. 6d.). Translations of "Thus Spake Zarathustra," "Human, All Too Human," "The Joyful Science," "The Genealogy of Morals," and "The Antichrist" will follow, with the lesser books scattered between; and at the end there will be an English version of Nietzsche's astonishing autobiography, "Ecce Homo," which was recently given to the world in German, in a single volume, at \$6.70. It wrenched my soul to pay the money, but half an hour's reading proved that the book was worth it.

Books about Nietzsche are as plentiful as books by Nietzsche. One of the latest is "WHO IS TO BE MASTER OF THE WORLD?" a somewhat labored interpretation by Anthony M. Ludovici (*Foulis*, 2s. 6d.). Another is "THE REVIVAL OF ARISTOCRACY," by Dr. Oscar Levy (*Foulis*, 3s. 6d.). Yet another is "NIETZSCHE: HIS LIFE AND WORK," by M. A. Mügge (*Brentano*, \$3.00), an admirable summary of the philosopher's writings, with a detailed and honest account of his life. Besides, there are Thomas Common's book of "SELECTIONS" (*Dutton*, \$2.00) and two excellent little books by A. R. Orage—"NIETZSCHE IN OUTLINE AND APHORISM" (2s. 6d.) and "NIETZSCHE, THE DIONYSIAN SPIRIT OF THE AGE" (*Foulis*, 1s.), not to speak of half a dozen lesser books.

Well, then, what has Nietzsche to say for himself? Why all this writing of books about him? What does he teach? And who was he? When was he born, and where? When did he die? When did he print his books? Let the sordid details of biography come first.

Nietzsche was born on October 15, 1844, in Prussian Saxony, and was the son of a preacher. His father died when he was five years old, and he was brought up in a house of women—of pious widows and chaste old maids. This made an insufferable prig of him, and when, at last, he was sent to school, the other boys had a lot of fun with him. But he was a brilliant pupil, and before he was fifteen he had already

written very creditable poetry, essays and music. At that time he was an earnest Christian and dreamed of becoming a doctor of divinity, but when he went up to the University of Bonn his faith began to grow shaky. Soon, indeed, he threw it overboard, and his priggishness with it, and became the German equivalent of a rah-rah boy—gulping daily oceans of pale beer, campaigning against the college town waitresses and singing Rabelaisian songs in bad Latin. But that was not for long, for beer made him ill, and when he followed a favorite professor from Bonn to Leipzig, he journeyed on the water wagon. All the rest of his life he maintained that beer drinking made the Germans a race of thick-witted hogs.

At Leipzig he was ripe for new gods, and they soon appeared to claim him. One was Arthur Schopenhauer, the pessimist, and the other was Richard Wagner, the musician. Nietzsche hailed them both with joy, but it was not long before he began to criticize them rather than worship them. The doctrine of Schopenhauer, that life was an intolerable burden, to be set down as soon as possible, aroused his healthy antagonism; and Wagner's constant flirting with Christian mysticism gave him just doubts of that vociferous prophet's sincerity as a philosopher. In 1869 Nietzsche was offered the chair of classical philology in Basel and went there to live. Soon afterwards he began to write books, and each succeeding book diverged more and more from the teachings of Schopenhauer and the maunderings of Wagner.

Ten years of college professing gave Nietzsche enough, and he was permitted to retire on a pension of six hundred dollars a year. He had a private income of as much more—and that was ample to keep an abstemious bachelor. Thereafter he wandered about Europe, spending his summers in the Alps and his winters in Italy or on the Riviera. His only surviving relative, a sister, had married and gone to South America. He was lonely, moody and sick. In the Franco-Prussian war, in which he had served as a hospital steward—



he couldn't go as a German soldier, because he had become a naturalized Swiss at Basel—his health had gone to pieces, and all the rest of his life he suffered from recondite and horrible maladies. To relieve his constant aches he tried chloral, with the inevitable result. Toward the end of the eighties he became a mental and physical wreck and had to be confined in an asylum. In 1890 his devoted sister, returning from South America, took him to her home, and there he lingered until August 25, 1900. His last words were of Richard Wagner, once his friend and later his bitter foe: "*Den habe ich sehr geliebt!*"

So much for Nietzsche's life. The best way to get a grasp upon his doctrines is to remember that they completely reverse Christianity. Christianity says that self-sacrifice is the greatest of all the virtues. Nietzsche calls it the worst of crimes against the race. Christianity says that the Ten Commandments were handed down to men by the Deity. Nietzsche says that they were invented by men and fathered upon the Deity to give them authority. Christianity says that the poor in spirit are blessed, "for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." Nietzsche says that the kingdom of Heaven has no existence, and that the poor in spirit are slaves, and deserve to be. Christianity says that man was made in God's image. Nietzsche says that man is merely "something to be surpassed"—a sort of provisional, half-baked being standing midway between the primordial protoplasm and the superman that is to come ages hence. Christianity says that man has a soul and a large outfit of very complex yearnings, moral impulses and aspirations. Nietzsche maintains that the only genuine natural impulse in man, as in other animals, is the will to remain alive.

Nietzsche's whole philosophy grew out of his early inquiries, as a student of Greek, into the spirit of Hellenism. It needed no long investigation to show that this spirit of Hellenism was almost diametrically opposed to the spirit of

Christianity. The Greeks, indeed, esteemed as virtues nearly all of the things banned by Christianity as vices and sins. Their notion of an admirable man was one who exhibited strength, ingenuity and what might be called assertive autonomy. A man who, on being smitten by a foe, turned the other cheek, would have excited their contempt. A man who, in the face of danger, threw down his arms and began to pray to the gods, would have made them laugh. They believed that life was a pleasant thing, and that it was worth while to fight for it. They believed in efficiency and egotism; they liked to do things—to rear great temples, to dance, to give gigantic shows, to make war, to amass wealth, to conquer.

Nietzsche soon came to the conclusion that the moral code of the Greeks in their great days was nothing more than a series of deductions from their race experience. They had found that the warlike qualities best safeguarded the state, and therefore they turned these qualities into virtues. In their dealings with the less advanced but more numerous peoples surrounding them, they had to be resolute, firm and unsentimental. The barbarian hordes of Asia Minor and the Balkan heights were not open to negotiation, conciliation or propitiation. It was useless to appeal to their sense of justice, for they had none, and dangerous to seek their good will, for every overture of that sort made them suspect weakness, and inflamed anew their yearning for rich pillage. They had to be met, in a word, with blood and iron, and meeting them thus, constantly and as a commonplace of self-protection, made the Greeks a domineering and ruthless race. So their word for "good—honorable—noble" was the same word that served them to represent "strong—ruling—warlike."

But among the Jews, not a thousand miles away, "good" meant something very different. Here, indeed, it stood for all the qualities the Greeks despised—humility, patience, obedience, self-sacrifice, resignation. And why? Because, says Nietzsche, the Jews had to face

the problem of surviving in an environment entirely different from that of the Greeks. Where the Greeks had hordes of barbarians to intimidate and enslave, the Jews had invulnerable masters to placate. The Jews, in their earlier and mightier days, had been as ruthless and assertive as the Greeks were now, but of late fate had been against them, and it was no longer possible for them to conquer. So they invented a morality to fit their condition. That morality had humility for its central idea. The most noble man was the man who bore most patiently the insults and privations of slavery—the meek, the poor in spirit, the pure in heart, the peacemaker.

Thus we arrive at definitions of two of Nietzsche's oft-quoted terms—*Herrenmoral*, or master morality, and *Sklavmoral*, or slave morality. The slave morality of the ancient Jews, he admitted freely, served an admirable purpose in its time, for it enabled the Jews, by self-effacement, to survive in the face of powerful foes. It was thus entirely sound and true—in ancient Palestine. But when, as an appendage of Christianity, it was taken over by the nations of Western Europe, it ceased to be true, for the conditions of life in Western Europe differed vastly from the conditions of life in ancient Palestine. The early German Christians, for example, were not weak slaves, and dependent upon some master race's good will for their right to live, but powerful, fighting men, almost Greek in their courage, and with a wilderness to subdue. The modern Germans are in like case, and so are we latter-day Americans. We have no need to ask by your leave of anyone. It is inconceivable that any nation of today should ever conquer us. In the most sanguinary of all imaginable world wars we might be sorely wounded, but our foes, it is plain, would be wounded just as sorely. And yet, because we still cling to the slave morality that we inherited from the ancient Jews, our "good" remains "humble—patient—obedient—long suffering—resigned," instead of "strong—ruling—independent."

Herein the reasons underlying Nietzsche's bitter opposition to Christianity, and to all other supernatural cults, begin to be apparent. A nation with a god, he says, always ascribes its code of morality to that god, in order to give it the highest possible authority. Its god, indeed, is nothing more or less than a personification of its racial virtues, with a sort of cosmic police power superimposed. Thus the god of the early fighting Jews and the chief god of the Greeks were powerful and ruthless generals, but the god of the post-exodus Jews was a mild and merciful judge, with more of the indulgent father than of the military commander in him. This habit of ascribing racial moral codes to gods, said Nietzsche, would be harmless enough if men invented a new god every time their mode of life was changed. But, instead of that, they usually cling sentimentally to the old one, and continue to subscribe to his moral code, even after it becomes utterly impossible to practise it. Thus we modern Americans and Europeans still make oath, when we worship the god of the post-exodus Jews, that "the meek shall inherit the earth," though we know very well, by abundant experience, that the meek inherit nothing at all. "In all Christendom," said Nietzsche, quoting some wise Frenchman, "there is not a single real Christian." That is to say, no man of today could follow the Beatitudes literally and survive. He must make constant compromises between his religion and his environment.

Nietzsche believed that if the dominant races of the present day could be rid of the outworn and unworkable moral code of the Jews, they would make far more rapid progress than the world has ever seen. Out of this idea grew his celebrated conceptions—the higher man and the superman. The higher man is merely an efficient and ruthless man who has rid himself of all pious cant and hypocrisy. He is not a predatory bully, as many critics of Nietzsche seem to think, but an intelligent progressivist, with an eye, not so much to his own immediate advantage,

as to the ultimate profit of the race. He wars upon the unfit chiefly because he doesn't want them to contaminate the racial strain. He sees nothing honorable nor noble in poverty and humility, but only a confession of unfitness to survive. Let the weak die, he says, that the strong may not have them to drag along. Let the highest honors of the world go to those men who make the most successful war upon the forces and conditions which work against the race—disease, climate, distance, time, terrestrial catastrophes, religions, superstitions, handicapping customs and laws. Not only to the warrior the honor, nor only to the emperor and millionaire, but also to the explorer, the pathologist, the revolutionary, the iconoclast, the immoralist.

The result, says Nietzsche, will be the evolution of the superman—a being exactly adapted, in mind and body, to the conditions of organic existence on the earth. He will be the absolute master of himself, defying all gods and devils, and acknowledging allegiance to his fellows only for the good of himself and the race, and as an act of free will. He will be superior to all compulsion, attack, anathema and disease. He will live on until life wearies him, and then he will seek death gladly, "as a little child seeks sleep."

Such, in crude outline, are the principal ideas in Nietzsche's philosophy. Is it insane, as his foes would have us believe? I am constrained to think not. In places it may tax the imagination, but in other places it makes an irresistible appeal to every reflective man. Twenty years ago Nietzsche was merely an interesting freak, but today you will find his notions elaborated in the writings of men whose sanity and title to leadership are unquestioned. Mr. Roosevelt borrowed copiously from Nietzsche for his essay on "The Strenuous Life"—the most astonishing and most sincere of all his compositions. From Nietzsche Dr. Metchnikoff got his idea of a welcome death, and from Nietzsche Dr. Eliot got two thirds of the propositions in his New Religion. Take away his Nietzschean flavor, and

Shaw would be a mere harlequin. Rid the world of Nietzsche, and the year of grace 1909 could show no living philosophy.

Read what he has to say for himself in the excellent Foulis translations. Wait until all the eighteen volumes are out, and then start with "The Dawn of Day." Proceed from that to "Beyond Good and Evil" and "The Genealogy of Morals." And then tackle "The Antichrist."

"THE POE CULT," by Eugene L. Didier (*Broadway Pub. Co.*, \$1.50), is a sort of one-volume encyclopedia of Poëana. Mr. Didier has given thirty years to the study of the subject, and in so far as the accumulation of facts is concerned, he has thoroughly mastered it. There is no documentary relic or record of Poe, anywhere in the habitable universe, that he has not examined with microscopic care, at least by proxy; and there is no doddering, garrulous old member of the Poe-I-Knew-Him-When Club, above or below the Mason and Dixon line, whose evidence he has not heard and set down. But when it comes to drawing conclusions from his facts, Mr. Didier shines less gloriously. His indignation often gets the better of his judgment; and ceasing altogether to be a critic, he becomes an evangelist walloping a bass drum.

Incidentally, Mr. Didier's English is full of delightful vagaries. On page 92, for example, he says that "Poe's love for his child wife, and his devotion to her in sickness, was one of the," etc. On page 88, again, we are told that "No stone marked the resting place of the poet whose genius has conferred more glory upon American literature than any other American writer." Are we to understand by this that Poe's "genius" was an "American writer"? Yet again, on page 130, appears this truly remarkable statement: "From that time he was a changed man: he, who never laughed and rarely ever smiled, scarcely ever smiled again." Here, indeed, was a change of extreme subtlety, for it converted a man who "rarely ever smiled" into a man who

"scarcely ever smiled." Once again, on page 28, we are told that Poe's early stories in the *Southern Literary Messenger* fascinated and astonished the reader "with (by?) the verisimilitude of their improbability." According to the Standard Dictionary, the word "verisimilitude" means "probability." It is no wonder, then, that stories which were marked by probable improbability fascinated and astonished the reader.

But it would be unfair to be severe with Mr. Didier. No man who has devoted his days and nights to the study of Poe can be expected to write good English.

"If men did not drink, there would be less need of chaperons." This acute remark is one of the many that make a fascinating volume of "ETIQUETTE FOR AMERICANS," by an anonymous "Woman of Fashion" (*Duffield*). The book is bound in limp leather, with a gilt top, and looks and smells like an Oxford Bible. It is not an elementary treatise for the climber just emerging from medicated flannels and barbarism; on the contrary, it assumes, as a matter of course, that the reader has already reached a high stage of civilization. In a word, it offers a sort of finishing course. Once you have mastered it, you need not fear a duchess, a head waiter or even John Drew.

Here and there in the book are indications that American society, at the top as well as further down, is still terrorized by occasional raids of the Goths and the Huns. "Eating with a noise," says the author, "is something that society men have been introducing of late." It is to be regretted that the reactionaries are not denounced by name, so that their accursed vulgarity might get its due punishment in execration and excommunication. The custom that they seek to revive was once universal in America. Only by the most laborious endeavors and in the face of the most savage opposition did certain ardent and self-sacrificing pioneers succeed in organizing a reform movement. The plain people

hooted and derided them; they were held up to scorn in the public prints; it was even hinted that they were secret advocates of monarchy and tyranny. But they kept up their thankless propaganda resolutely, and in the end they saw their theory of eating the accepted doctrine, at least among the more advanced *cognoscenti*. Is their life work to go for naught? Is laziness to conquer virtuosity? I, for one, venture to hope not.

Eating noisily, like sleeping audibly, is a disgusting habit, not because it violates any of the laws of nature—it is obvious, indeed, that it does nothing of the sort—but because it makes life unbearable to all other persons within earshot. A civilized man may accustom himself to the bray of a jackass, the wolf tones of a tenor, the explosive violence of George M. Cohan's orchestration or the piteous shrieks of the damned, but, no matter how great his force of character, he can never hear without a shiver the uncanny gurgle that soup makes when it is removed from a spoon by suction. If this gurgle be complicated by the interference of whiskers or loose false teeth the effect is staggering. And that effect is not only psychic, but also physical. At its least it manifests itself in a feeling of acute discomfort, much resembling seasickness; at its worst it may lead to syncope and collapse, or even to convulsions. Hell yawns for the loud eater.

THE publishers of "THE CALLING OF DAN MATTHEWS," by Harold Bell Wright (*Book Supply Co.*, \$1.50) send out with it a sixteen-page biography of the author, copiously illustrated. On page five there is an artistic photograph showing "the author starting to the express office, miles away over the desert, to forward his manuscript by express to the publishers." As a work of art, the picture has merits, but as a likeness it is a failure, for the camera was set up astern of the author, and so we see only the back of his neck and the hindquarters of his mustang. Below this photograph is another showing

"the combined study and studio built, by the author's own hands," and a footnote on the opposite page gives information that "the exposure was taken from the southeast." A careful study of the shadows on the building reveals the fact that the exposure was also "taken" in the morning—probably at some time between ten and eleven o'clock. We know, too, that the author was not laboring inside at the time, for we are told on another page that "at such times a small flag floats over the study." "When at work he will not permit interruption, but when the flag is lowered you will be greeted, if you call, with a smile and a hearty welcome." It is not likely, however, that many visitors call, for the Tecolote Rancho—that is the name of the author's principality—is in southern California, "a few miles north of the Mexican border," and "just beyond Death Valley."

Many interesting, and even astonishing facts regarding the author are set forth in this little book. He is the father, it appears, of three novels, and all of them are extraordinary successes. "That Printer of Udell's" is one of them. He spent three years writing it and put a lot of happy thoughts into it, but several publishers, with characteristic stupidity, declined it. Then, fortunately enough, it fell into the hands of the Book Supply Company, which accepted it with alacrity. "By the time the first copy was offered for sale, nearly ten thousand dollars had been expended in plates, advertising, etc." But the money was well invested, for since then "this splendid story has reached a sale of over one hundred thousand copies." Mr. Wright's next story, "The Shepherd of the Hills," took even longer to produce—four years, to be exact. He was "tendered a fabulous sum by the Book Supply Company for its sole ownership, but he wisely preferred its publication on a royalty basis." No doubt he has a fat bank account by now. Let us hope so.

Several pages of quips and epigrams from "THE CALLING OF DAN MATTH-

ews" enable the lazy critic to absorb the proteids of the book without running the risk of getting its bones into his dental crevices. Say what you will about the literary style of these wheezes, you cannot deny their abounding truth. An example: "Whatever or whoever is responsible for the existence of such people and such conditions is a problem for the age to solve. The fact is, they are here." Marcus Aurelius himself could not have put it better. It has the universal applicability of a strophe from the Book of Proverbs. You can substitute any names you want for "such people" and anything you want for "such conditions," and the truth of the saying will still be overpowering. Try it with Hall Caine and cholera morbus. Try it again with James J. Jeffries and the music of the future. Try it yet again with Mrs. Leslie Carter and cruelty to animals. A man capable of thinking such magnificent thoughts is wasting his time on best sellers; he should devote himself to writing Bibles.

But I am forgetting "THE CALLING OF DAN MATTHEWS." It starts off gaily with the following muddling of tenses: "This story began in the Ozark Mountains. It follows the trail that is nobody knows how old. But mostly this story happened in Corinth." Soon we are in the midst of Dan Matthews's woes. He is an ecclesiastic, it appears, with a bothersome congregation on his hands. Dan, in his simple-minded way, looks upon his church as a refuge for the weak and persecuted, and Christianity as a scheme for making men better. His congregation, on the contrary, regards the church as a social club, and Christianity as a scheme for separating "nice" folk from those not so "nice." What is Dan to do—compromise—give in? Most young preachers, their enthusiasm oozing out of them, try the one thing and eventually come to the other. But not so Dan. He is a man as well as a preacher, and when he finds, at last, that it is impossible to be both and make a living, he ceases to be a preacher.

The author's style wanders far from

the canons of good English, but his story shows no little earnestness and plausibility. It is, in brief, not half so bad as the publisher's encomiums lead you to expect. If that fatal biography were not sent out with it, it would probably seem pretty good.

"JASON," by Justus Miles Forman (*Harpers*, \$1.50), is a tale of kidnapping according to a new method. The victim this time is not a dear little Fauntleroy with silky curls, but a husky youngster approaching twenty-one. His father, who is dying, has a hoard of gold, and this hoard is coveted by an immoral uncle. Now, if the youngster can be induced to neglect his dying parent in some callous and aggravated manner, the chances are that the latter will leave the specie to the uncle. What could be easier? Bait is provided in the shape of a lovely young girl, and the son goes galloping after her, leaving his father to die alone. But this fair beginning comes to an unexpected ending, and at the close we see virtue triumphant and the dissolute uncle foiled. A brisk and well-told story, with no great pretensions, but plenty of action and interest.

THE problem which Arthur Hornblow seeks to solve in "BY RIGHT OF CONQUEST" (*Dillingham*, \$1.50) is this: Suppose a girl of the very highest caste and a man of the very lowest find themselves together on a deserted island—"will he exercise his rights as the stronger and drag her down to his own animal level, or will she, by sheer force of character, fine mentality and spiritual force, tame the beast and lift him up to her level?" A problem, indeed! But Mr. Hornblow discreetly modifies it a bit before setting out to find its answer. That is to say, he turns his theoretical girl, with her "fine mentality and spiritual force," into a rather silly real girl, with a large bump of vulgar vanity and scarcely any intelligence at all; and his "animal" hero, by the same stroke, becomes an educated English gentleman, and the last of a long line of baronets. As a matter of fact, the problem, in its

final state, is actually reversed, for it is the girl who stands forth as the emotional plebeian, and the man who shows "force of character, fine mentality and spiritual force." But, whatever its metamorphosis, it still remains an interesting problem, and Mr. Hornblow's final solution of it is the logical and inevitable one. Civilization triumphs over barbarism, as it ever must when the two collide. The baronet shows his pretentious lady love that there are greater things in heaven and earth than dollars and dinner parties, and good old Nature does the rest. She embarks upon her great adventure an irritating snob; she emerges from it a woman of poise and sure vision, not a little worldly wise, but not a little lovable.

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by Cale Young Rice.

(*Doubleday-Page*, \$1.25)

A play in blank verse, marked by safe and sane mediocrity. It has life and color, and it is actable, but a diligent search fails to find any poetry in it.

WENDELL PHILLIPS—

by Lorenzo Sears.

(*Doubleday-Page*, \$1.50)

The first adequate biography of the great anti-slavery spellbinder. A serious and careful study, by a thoroughly competent, if over-friendly historian.

MISS SELINA LUE—

by Maria Thompson Daviess.

(*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.25)

Another book of b'gosh pathos and humor—this time with half a dozen remarkably good drawings by Paul J. Meylan.

ANNE OF AVONLEA—

by L. M. Montgomery.

(*Page*, \$1.50)

A sort of sequel to "Anne of Green Gables," and showing much the same genial quality.

DOROTHY OF ANGELWOOD—

by M. Y. T. H. Myth.

(*Broadway Pub. Co.*, 75 cents)

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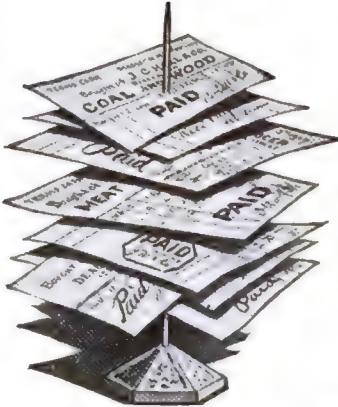
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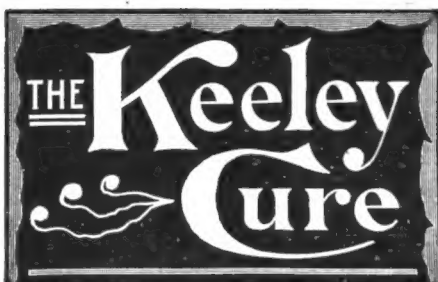
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